

Happy New Year from the Northwest Straits Initiative! Read our January newsletter for information about our new marine debris cleanup program.



## New Marine Debris Cleanup Program

The Northwest Straits Commission is working with the Department of Ecology's Washington Conservation Corps (WCC) to clean up Puget Sound shoreline sites where there is an abundance of potentially damaging trash such as plastics, styrofoam, fishing net materials and treated wood debris. We welcome Paul Argites, who was hired to launch this program. Paul will be gathering information from each of the Marine Resources Committees about work needed at particular cleanup sites, and working with the WCC to schedule Veterans work crews to perform the clean up. If you would like to nominate a beach for this work, please contact Paul at [argites@nwstraits.org](mailto:argites@nwstraits.org) or 360-428-1043.


## Welcome new Puget Sound Partnership Executive Director

On January 7, Gov. Jay Inslee announced his appointment of Sheida R. Sahandy as the new Executive Director for the Puget Sound Partnership. Sahandy worked for the City of Bellevue since 2006, where she served as the Assistant to City Manager. Her appointment is effective February 4. We welcome Sheida and offer our thanks to Marc Daily who has been serving as interim Director.

## Survey Training - Spawning Forage Fish

The Commission is organizing free

January 2014

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### Web Site Launched

Skagit MRC has a new web site! Check it out at [www.skagitmrc.org](http://www.skagitmrc.org).

## Derelict Crab Pot Removal



Ever wondered how derelict crab pot removal is done? Check out this short video from recent removal operations in Snohomish County where the diver is rigged with a video camera. Watch it at <http://youtu.be/CH8R3j0L5fg>.

training for MRC members and interested volunteers wishing to survey beaches for spawning Surf Smelt and Sand Lance. Accurate survey data are needed to help protect shoreline sites from development, better understand the regional distribution of spawning forage fish, and help answer questions around Puget Sound recovery.



Forage fish survey workshops will be held between March and June 2014 in partnership with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Department of Natural Resources. Each event will include a natural history presentation, sampling protocols, egg identification, and field trip. Contact Caroline Gibson for more information at (360) 391-7190, [gibson@nwstraits.org](mailto:gibson@nwstraits.org).

## Northwest Straits Foundation Community Oil Spill Workshops Underway

The Northwest Straits Foundation workshop series focusing on oil spill preparedness and response is underway around the region and getting rave reviews! The Foundation collaborates with county MRCs and emergency management personnel, the state Departments of Ecology and Fish and Wildlife and Ecology, tribal spill response personnel, and the US Coast Guard to give community members a clear idea of how governments plan for and respond to oil spills in the marine environment. The trainings also introduce participants to volunteer opportunities for spill response.



Registration is open for free upcoming Community Oil Spill Preparedness and Response Workshops in Clallam, Whatcom and Skagit counties. To register, please contact Michelle Lim, [lim@nwstraits.org](mailto:lim@nwstraits.org), 360-733-1725. [Click here for more information on dates and locations.](#)

*Photo: Captain Joe Raymond of the U.S. Coast Guard discusses the Vessel Traffic Management System during the Port Townsend Training.*

## Events

**January 25, 2014 - Community Engagement for Oil Spill Response.**  
9am-3pm, Clallam County, Emergency Operations Center. [Click here for more information.](#)

**January 27, 2014 - Starlight Beach Walk,** Edmonds Olympic Beach, 7:00-8:30pm. Co-sponsored by the Snohomish MRC.

**January 31, 2014 - Northwest Straits Commission meeting.** Northwest Maritime Center, Port Townsend.

## Goodbyes!

The end of the year often marks the end of a term for MRC members, and the end of 2013 was the end of the line for some fantastic volunteers: Wendy Steffenson, Whatcom MRC member and former chair; Keats Garman, Whatcom MRC member; Andy Stevenson, Clallam MRC member; Ian Jefferds, Island MRC member and former chair; Erica Pickett, Skagit MRC member; and Barbara Marrett, San Juan MRC member. Many thanks!

**February 1, 2014 - Sound Waters - One Day University.** Oak Harbor, 8:00am-4:00pm. [Click here for more information.](#)

**February 22, 2014 - Community Engagement for Oil Spill Response.** 9am-3pm, Whatcom County, Squalicum Boathouse. [Click here for more information.](#)

**February 26, 2014 - Starlight Beach Walk,** Mukilteo Lighthouse Park, 7:00-8:30pm. Co-sponsored by the Snohomish MRC.

**February 27, 2014 - Sea Level Rise - Opportunities for Planning.** Padilla Bay Reserve, 9:00am-4:30pm, More information and registration at [www.coastaltraining-wa.org](http://www.coastaltraining-wa.org).

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### New Voluntary No Anchor Zone in Jefferson County

February 2014



With the recent installation of four marker buoys in South Port Townsend Bay, the Jefferson County MRC established a third Voluntary Marine Protected Area that will protect eelgrass, shellfish beds, and marine water quality. This was a key element in the South Port

Townsend Bay Management Plan that satisfies WA Department of Health requirements in an area locally known as Lower Port Hadlock and allows shellfish harvest and recreational boat use to co-exist. [Read more...](#)

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We refreshed our public website! Did you notice? Check out our new look at [www.nwstraits.org](http://www.nwstraits.org)

### Salish Sea Stewards program launch

The Skagit MRC is offering a free training to citizens interested in learning about marine ecology, the nearshore environment, issues that impact the Salish Sea, and what we can do to protect it. Participants who complete the training will be offered



the opportunity to engage in local restoration, conservation, monitoring, and education and outreach activities. Check out the [program summary](#) for more details. Training begins **March 10th, 2014**. Click [here](#) to download an application, **due February 28th, 2014!**

### Forage Fish Survey Workshops

The Northwest Straits Commission is offering free training in intertidal spawn surveys for MRC members and other citizen science volunteers. Space is limited to 12 participants; preference will be given to individuals needing hands-on instruction for projects being conducted this year. Workshops will be held in partnership with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife



and the Department of Natural Resources/ Aquatic Reserve Program. To register contact Caroline Gibson at [gibson@nwstraits.org](mailto:gibson@nwstraits.org); (360) 391-7190. Click [here](#) for more information.

### Clallam Oil Spill Response Training

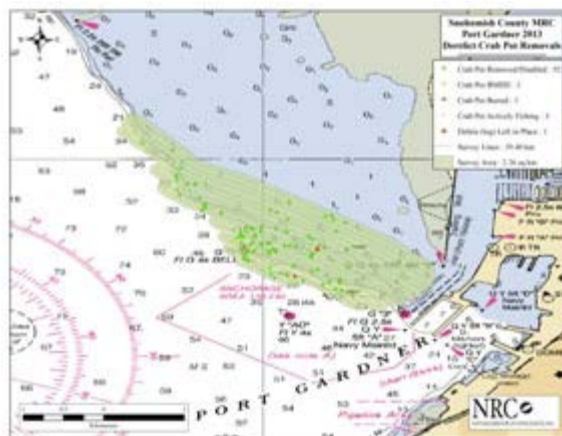


Registration is open for an 8-hour HAZWOPER (Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response) training on March 8. It will be held in the Council Chambers at Port Angeles City Hall.

The class covers hazardous situation recognition, site assessment and air monitoring, personal protective equipment, decontamination procedures, and an overview of how oil spill response operations are conducted. Upon completion of the training, participants will receive an 8-hour HAZWOPER certificate. The training is sponsored by the Clallam MRC and many partners. Click [here](#) to register.

### Derelict crab pot removal in Port Gardner

The Snohomish County MRC hired divers to remove or disable 88 derelict crab pots in Port Gardner in December 2013. The



same area had been cleaned of pots just one year before so there was great interest in finding out why so many crab pots were lost there so quickly. They found that the two most common reasons for gear loss was gear malfunction, mistakes made by crabbers (not enough line) and vessel strikes cutting the lines. This information will be used in crabber education projects to help crabbers from losing their gear.

### Nearshore Restoration Project Update: Bowman Bay

The Northwest Straits Foundation is partnering with the Skagit MRC and Washington State Parks on a feasibility study and design to remove riprap armoring from



the nearshore of Bowman Bay in Deception Pass State Park. This phase of the project is being funded by the EPA through the Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program. The project advisory team of Jay Lind, Tracy Alker, Jack Hartt, Tom Murley, Lisa

Kaufman, and Joan Drinkwin is working closely with Coastal Geologic Services, who was awarded the design contract. Preliminary investigations have begun, including searching for the buried fish hatchery that once occupied the site. Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group will be providing the planting design elements of the project, while Pete Haase is leading a fantastic group of volunteers searching every couple of weeks for forage fish spawning activities (none discovered yet!). *Photo: Pete Haase and Jack Middleton looking for forage fish eggs*

#### Events

**February 18, 2014 - *Blackwater No More: Puget Sound as a No Discharge Zone***, 7:00pm-8:30pm, RE Sources Sustainable Living Center, 2309 Meridian St., Bellingham.

**February 22, 2014 - *Whatcom Oil Spill Response Workshop***, 9:00am-3:00pm. Squalicum Boathouse (Zuanich Park) Bellingham. Participants need to bring their own lunch! Click [here](#) for more information.

**February 26, 2014 - *Starlight Beach Walk at Mukilteo***, 7:00-8:30pm. Meet at Mukilteo Lighthouse Park. Sponsored by the Snohomish MRC.

#### Forage Fish Survey Training Dates and Locations:

- **March 19, 2014** - Port Townsend Marine Science Center, 10:00am-2:00pm.
- **May 17, 2014** - Department of Ecology/Bellingham Field Office, 10:00am-2:00pm.
- **June 16, 2014** - NOAA/Mukilteo Research Station, 10:00am-2:00pm.

#### Articles and Reports

[\*Sea Change: Struggling with Next Steps\*](#). Craig Welch, Seattle Times

[\*Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation in Washington State: Technical Summaries for Decision Makers\*](#).

[\*West Coast Ocean Data Portal\*](#). Launched by the West Coast

Governors' Alliance on Ocean Health.

***Coastal Blue Carbon Opportunity Assessment for the Snohomish Estuary: The Climate Benefits of Estuary Restoration.*** Released by Restore America's Estuaries.

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## March 2014

### We're Hiring!

The Northwest Straits Commission is hiring a Program Coordinator. This is a part time position (80%) at our offices at Padilla Bay Reserve. [Click here for more information](#). The closing date for applications is March 16.

### Protecting Kelp in Puget Sound



The Northwest Straits Commission is launching a new citizen science initiative to protect kelp, and monitor changes to local kelp beds and the creatures that associate with them.

Kelp is hugely

important in Puget Sound, where among an astounding array of 23 species we have the 'bull' kelp familiar to many boaters and beachcombers. This kelp has disappeared from many areas, and like eelgrass, is critical habitat for marine wildlife, warranting protection via Critical Area Ordinances, Shoreline Master Plan updates, and NOAA Fisheries provisions for endangered rockfish – all processes in which MRCs are engaged. Stay tuned for information on a new boat-based survey protocol being developed with kelp experts and MRC volunteers this summer.


### Forage Fish as an indicator of Puget Sound recovery

Northwest Straits Commission Marine Program Manager Caroline Gibson joined scientists and conservation advocates in a briefing on herring, smelt, and other forage fish to the Washington



state legislature's House Environment Committee this week. One key message -- protect nearshore habitats in which these fish spawn. As Martha Kongsgaard, chair of the Puget Sound

## March 2014

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### Website Refresh

We refreshed our public website! Did you notice? Check out our new look at [www.nwstraits.org](http://www.nwstraits.org)



Partnership's Leadership Council noted, this was an historic moment in Puget Sound recovery efforts, the first time that the issue of forage fish protection has garnered attention at the Capitol for over an hour. Watch the briefing [here](#). View powerpoint presentations [here](#).

*Photo: Dr. Tessa Francis (left) and Caroline Gibson (right).*

### **Nearshore workshop connects people, policies, and places**

Congratulations to Cheryl Lowe and the Jefferson County MRC for organizing an excellent Nearshore Restoration Planning Workshop on February 27. The City of Port Townsend and Jefferson County co-sponsored this event - the first of its kind to bring together the groups and agencies involved in local nearshore restoration projects and review how and where activities align with City and County Shoreline Master Plans (SMP). Coastal geologist Hugh Shipman presented an overview of sea level rise in Puget Sound, and considerations for planning projects - such as to restore natural processes rather than landscape configurations, and to focus on a specific kind of place like a pocket estuary, a beach, or a marsh. Hugh stated afterward that "I always hoped that the restoration planning element of the new SMPs would provide an opportunity to see more of this happening, so a workshop like this was perfect! I also hope it serves as a model for efforts in other jurisdictions."

Some audio from this event is available online, provided by Jefferson MRC member Al Bergstein: [Click here to listen](#).

### **Marine Debris Cleanup in Skagit County**



The first marine debris projects were completed in Skagit County during the first week of March. Paul Argities worked with a specialized Washington

Conservation Corps all-Veterans crew to remove debris from a closed marsh lagoon adjacent to Cooks Cove on Guemes Island. The crew removed 41.5 pounds of debris, mostly various forms of small plastic fragments, from in and around the lagoon area. In addition to the cleanup on Guemes Island, the crew removed an additional 5,240 pounds of debris from Similk Beach near Anacortes.

### **Member Spotlight: Phil Green, San Juan MRC**

Phil Green joined the San Juan MRC in August, 2013 though he has been attending MRC meetings regularly for many years. Born and raised

in Massachusetts, Phil made his way to Washington State in 1973 for a job with the National Park Service. Phil attended Western Washington University (WWU) where he received his M.S. in Mathematics and went on to teach math courses at WWU and Skagit Valley College for over a decade.



In 1998, Phil began work with the Nature Conservancy coordinating Bald Eagle surveys in Skagit County during the winter months and monitoring Yellow Island as Preserve Steward throughout the rest of the year. Phil now works and lives year round on Yellow Island, keeping the island in its pristine and natural state and teaching visitors about natural history. He also collaborates with US Fish and Wildlife Service and WA Dept of Fish and Wildlife staff to monitor and protect the marine preserve that surrounds Yellow Island.

In his free time, Phil enjoys scuba diving, nature photography, and volunteering with local organizations including Sea Doc, the Marine Mammal Stranding Network and UW Friday Harbor Labs where he mentors students participating in marine bird and mammal surveys. Welcome to the MRC, Phil!

### Goodbyes



This month, long-time staff member at the Puget Sound Partnership and one of the original Northwest Straits Commissioners, Duane Fagergren retired from state service and recently participated in his last meeting of the

Commission. Duane served as chair of the Commission twice, and served as chair of the Executive and Education Committees during his time on the Commission. Duane's contributions to the Commission over the years cannot be understated, including a wealth of knowledge, an ability to build relationships, a sincere love of place, and some truly amazing oysters. Thank you, Duane.

*Photo: Duane Fagergren (right) and Tom Cowan, former NWSC*

*Director (left).*

In Skagit County, MRC member Jim Ramaglia has resigned from his seat after serving many years representing recreational divers. An avid diver and underwater photographer, he has generously shared many of his gorgeous underwater photos of marine life and habitat over the years.

Stephanie Williams (MRC Vice-Chair) has resigned from her position on the Whatcom MRC to further her career aspirations as a geologist in Seattle. Stephanie served five years on the Whatcom MRC in the role of providing scientific expertise, contributing her work-related knowledge in the realm of coastal processes, marine ecology, nearshore restoration and enhancement projects, and coastal property



owner outreach. Congratulations Stephanie! *Photo (left): Stephanie Williams.*

#### **Welcome New Members!**

Dale Moses is a new Recreation representative for the Jefferson MRC. Dale is an avid boater and kayaker, and brings experience gained from 35 years in the Navy and a few more years managing a law firm and then construction projects.

The Whatcom MRC welcomes two new members: Jim Hansen, a retired fish biologist and restoration coordinator with the Lummi Nation has been appointed to represent a recreational stakeholder interest; and Rachel Benbrook, the Citizen Action Training School Coordinator with the Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association, has been appointed to represent a conservation/environmental stakeholder interest. Rachel and Jim both have a wealth of experience in project management and nearshore restoration work in the Northwest Straits region.

We extend a warm welcome to these new members!

#### **Opportunity to help protect surf smelt**

The WA Department of Fish and Wildlife is seeking public comments on proposed changes to regulations that could increase protection for smelt in Puget Sound. [Click here](#) to submit comments, deadline May 30th. For more information about surf smelt, check out the Sea Doc Society's recent [fact sheet](#).

#### **Events**

**March 15, 2014 - *Community Engagement for Oil Spill Response.*** Padilla Bay Reserve, 9:00am-3:00pm. RSVP to Northwest Straits Foundation, 360-733-1725.

**March 19, 2014 - *Forage Fish Survey Training.*** Port Townsend

Marine Science Center, 10:00am-2:00pm [Click here for more information](#). Registration required. [This training is currently full.](#)

**April 5, 2014 - Shoreline Landowner Workshop.** Port Hadlock.  
10:00am-3:00pm. [Click here for more information and registration details](#).

**May 3, 2014 - Shoreline Landowner Workshop.** Coupeville.  
10:00am-3:00pm. [Click here for more information and registration details](#).

**May 14, 2014 - Ocean Acidification Community Forum.** 6:30pm,  
Everett Station.

**May 17, 2014 - Forage Fish Survey Training.** Dept of Ecology  
Bellingham Field Office, 10:00am-2:00pm. [Click here for more information](#). Registration required.

**June 16, 2014 - Forage Fish Survey Training.** NOAA/Mukilteo  
Research Station, 10:00am-2:00pm. [Click here for more information](#). Registration required.

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Happy Spring from the Northwest Straits Initiative!



## April 2014

### Community Beach Cleanup



Looking for a way to celebrate Earth Day? Participate in the Washington Coast Cleanup on April 19th, and join the Clallam MRC, Clallam Bay Sekiu Lions' Club and the Chamber of Commerce to remove litter from the shoreline from Pillar Point to Bullman Beach. The MRC will provide a 20-yard dumpster, bags, and gloves to volunteers. Participants can sign up in Clallam Bay on the day of the cleanup or at the Washington CoastSavers [website](#).

*Picture right: Former Clallam MRC member, Ian Miller after beach cleanup along the Strait of Juan de Fuca.*

### Forage Fish Survey Workshop



The Northwest Straits Commission's recent survey training in Port Townsend was a big



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### Website Refresh

We refreshed our public website! Did you notice? Check out our new look at [www.nwstraits.org](http://www.nwstraits.org)

### Job Opportunity

Padilla Bay Estuarine Research Reserve is seeking a Research Coordinator to serve as the lead estuarine scientist who will oversee the System Wide Monitoring Program and other federal science mandates. [Click here](#) for position details.

### New Report Online

The Washington Department of Ecology document **Soft Shoreline Stabilization: Shoreline Master Program Planning and Implementation Guidance** is now available online. [Click here to view](#).



success. Twelve members of the Jefferson and Island MRCs and partnering groups enjoyed a primer on Puget Sound forage fish monitoring and management. During their time in the classroom and on the beach at Fort Worden State Park they learned key differences between surf smelt, sand lance and other tiny fish eggs under the microscope. This is the first in our series of workshops for MRC and other volunteers who are currently involved in local nearshore studies and habitat restoration projects. Big thanks to our partners, Dept. of Fish and Wildlife and Dept. of Natural Resources and Jamie Landry and the Port Townsend Marine Science Center for providing the classroom and lab equipment. To register for a workshop in Bellingham (May 17) or Mukilteo (June 16) please contact Caroline Gibson at [gibson@nwstraits.org](mailto:gibson@nwstraits.org)

### **Northwest Straits Initiative at the Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference**

The 2014 [Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference](#) is coming up on April 30-May 2. If you're attending this valuable regional event, join us at a session involving the Northwest Straits Initiative:

- Forage Fish Research and Protection - Caroline Gibson, session co-chair
- Novel Actions to Address Ocean Acidification - Caroline Gibson, session co-chair
- Kelp Restoration - Ginny Broadhurst presenting
- Evaluation, conservation & restoration of species associated with high-relief, rocky habitat in Salish Sea - Joan Drinkwin co-chair and presenting
- Campaigns for engagement - Ginny Broadhurst, co-chair and presenting
- Targeted Outreach in Port Susan Marine Stewardship Area - Kathleen Herrmann and Robyn du Pre' (poster session)

### **SLURP your support for Northwest Straits Foundation!**

Are you ready for the  
16th annual **Shellfish  
Lover's Ultimate  
Rejuvenation Party  
(SLURP)** on Sunday,  
April 27 in Olympia? Aw  
shucks...we sure are.  
We'll be there with bells



**Congratulations to Caroline Gibson for 5 years of service to the Northwest Straits Commission!**



on, especially since we learned that Northwest Straits Foundation is one of a handful of beneficiaries of the event's proceeds. Sponsored by Pacific Coast Shellfish Growers Association as a celebration of healthy, sustainable shellfish of its 100+ West Coast members, the event features the best of its members' oysters, clams, mussels and geoduck, bodacious brews, Washington wines, live music, the wildly popular 'shuck, slurp and slam' and more. Plus, ten fabulous restaurants, including [Etta's Seafood](#) and [Ballard Annex Oyster House](#) will work their culinary magic with your favorite shellfish while you enjoy an evening with friends and family. It's all happening at [Fish Tale Brewhouse](#) 4:30 to 8:00 pm on Sunday, April 27. Don't miss the fun! [Buy tickets here](#). More information at [www.pcsga.org/slurp](http://www.pcsga.org/slurp).

### Welcome Holly Faulstich



This month we welcome Holly Faulstich to the Commission staff as the Program Coordinator. Born and raised on the Olympic Peninsula,

Holly earned her B.S. in Environmental Science and Biology from Western WA University. After a few glorious field seasons with the National Park Service, she headed to the desert to pursue a Master's degree in Geography at the University of Arizona with a focus on climatology and tree-ring research. From fish habitat surveying to air quality testing, Holly has held a wide range of jobs in the environmental field and is excited to put her skills to use for the Commission.

### Member spotlight: Jerry Masters

Jerry Masters was appointed to the Northwest Straits Commission in 2010, having previously served on the Snohomish MRC. A native to Skagit Valley, he lives in



Mukilteo, and is Vice-President of Valley Supply, a regional building supply company. Jerry has shown unwavering commitment to the ideals of the Northwest Straits Initiative by supporting the work of the MRCs and building strong relationships with our partners.

"The most rewarding part of my work with the Initiative is watching people decide to put their own interests aside to do the right thing for the environment and the greater good. I expected stakeholders to sit at a table and argue it out. And we don't do that. At the commission level and even at the MRC level, everybody brings forth their issues and we ultimately find a group decision. Regardless of the challenge, regardless of the problem, we find a solution that works. And if we don't agree on an issue, we feel we can speak out and say why we don't agree and the group continues to work on it until we find some common ground. And I believe if we're actually going to solve environmental challenges – we have to continue to take that approach."

## Events

### **April 19, 2014 - *Washington Coast Cleanup.***

Various times and locations. Co-sponsored by the Clallam MRC. Volunteers can sign up at the Washington CoastSavers [website](#).

**April 22, 2014 - *Ocean Frontiers.*** 6:00pm, Skagit Valley College, Mt. Vernon. Co-sponsored by the Skagit MRC.

### **April 24, 2014 - *Howarth Park Beach***

**Restoration.** Public meeting, 6:00pm - 7:30pm, Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Everett. Co-sponsored by the Snohomish MRC. For more information, see the flyer [here](#).

**April 28, 2014 - Fort Townsend State Park Shoreline Restoration Open House.** 6:00pm - 7:30pm, Friends' Barn at Fort Townsend State Park. Co-sponsored by the Jefferson MRC. For more information, see the flyer [here](#).

**May 3, 2014 - Living With the Coast.** 10:00am – 3:00pm, Coupeville Rec Hall. Shoreline landowners on Whidbey Island are invited to attend this FREE workshop on coastal process and shoreline erosion management. Registration by phone at (360) 733-1725, or [click here](#) to register online.

**May 17, 2014 - Locust Beach Cleanup.** 1:00pm - 3:00pm, Locust Beach, Bellingham. Co-sponsored by the Whatcom MRC.

**May 18, 2014 - Whatcom Water Fest.** 12:00pm - 4:00pm. Maritime Heritage Park.

**May 20, 2014 - Salish Sea Shoreline Forum.** 8:30am-4:00pm, South Seattle Community College. Free with optional \$10 lunch available. The topic for the forum is: New and Emerging Scientific Research focused on Armoring and the Nearshore: Implications for Implementers. [Click here](#) to register.

**August 4-8, 2014 - Science of Oil Spills (SOS).** Hosted by NOAA's Office of Response and Restoration. [Click here](#) for application information, space limited to 40 participants.

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## Whatcom MRC and the Garden of the Salish Sea Program



The Whatcom MRC recently partnered with the Puget Sound Restoration Fund's **Garden of the Salish Sea Program** to survey clams in

North Chuckanut Bay. This collaboration provided an opportunity to educate students from Wade King Elementary School, Bellingham Technical College, and the local community about the value of protecting shellfish, marine resources, and marine water quality, while providing survey data about the types, numbers, and sizes of clams found in Chuckanut Bay. Data will be added to previous survey data for analysis of trends in abundance, distribution, and health of shellfish in the area. Information on previous clam surveys conducted by the Whatcom MRC can be found [here](#). Thank you to all the volunteers who helped make the clam survey a success!

*Photo: Whatcom MRC member, Doug Stark, helping students with clam identification.*

## Community Forum on Ocean Health - Everett

This past Wednesday was the first in a Northwest Straits series of forums on ocean health. Big thanks to Snohomish County Council Chair Dave Somers for moderating an informative and thought-provoking hour and a half. Snohomish MRC vice chair Franchesca Perez opened for presenters Dr. Terrie Klinger, Simon Geerlofs, and Betsy Peabody, speaking to global issues - ocean acidification and sea level rise - and what is being done about them right here and now. Audience member Dr. Richard Feely, an international expert on ocean acidification, said the event was "inspiring". Stay tuned for forthcoming announcement of forums in Jefferson, Island, and Whatcom counties in coming months. Visit our [website](#) to learn more about ocean acidification.

## Remembering Billy Frank, Jr

We are deeply saddened about the

## May 2014



## May is Puget Sound Starts Here month!

Check out our events for local activities throughout the region.



## Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference

Thank you to the many volunteers and staff of the Northwest Straits Initiative for a great job representing at the 2014 Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference! A record 1200+ people working on both sides of the US-Canada border turned out for this year's gathering in Seattle. Interesting, uplifting, and at times overwhelming, this event featured a broad range of presentation topics and activities, and dynamic hallway conversation for three days strong. Abstracts



recent loss of one of the region's most charismatic and influential leaders, Billy Frank Jr.



We had the honor of his presence at several events, including our 2012 MRC conference. For a glimpse at the impact of his work, read more on the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission [website](#).

*Photo: Ginny Broadhurst (NWSC Director), Billy Frank Jr., Jerry Masters (former NWSC Chair)*

## Marine Debris Removal



During the last week of April, the Washington Conservation Corps Veteran's crew completed a marine debris cleanup project in Island County. The WCC crew concentrated their removal efforts on

a stretch of shoreline along Livingston Bay, on the southeast side of Camano Island. The crew removed 2,580 lbs. of marine debris including car tires, styrofoam blocks, plastics, and creosote-treated wood. Click [here](#) to learn more about this Marine Debris Program.

## New Funding for Crab Escapement Research

The Northwest Straits Foundation recently received funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to conduct research on the crab escapement rates of various popular crab pot designs used in Puget Sound. Derelict crab pot removal operations in Puget Sound have shown that even using escape cord as required does not eliminate impacts to species because sometimes crab cannot escape from the derelict pots even after the cord disintegrates. This study will help determine which pot designs are most



and other information from the conference is online [here](#).



*Ron Akeson, Photo by: Janna Nichols*

## Tribute to Ron Akeson

On April 23, we lost one of the region's most accomplished and qualified technical dive instructors. Ron Akeson was trained in marine biology, a skilled photographer, writer and passionate volunteer. Ron served on the Whatcom MRC from 2003-2011 and was vice-president of Washington SCUBA Alliance. He owned Adventures Down Under in Bellingham and provided friendly advice and SCUBA certification to many of us who called him a friend. His passing occurred as a consequence of a SCUBA accident near Mukilteo on April 17.

effective at allowing crabs to escape. The research is undertaken as part of the Foundation's commitment to reduce impacts from derelict crab pots in Puget Sound.

*Photo: Onboard biologist Paul Rudell assesses crab impacts from derelict pots removed from Dungeness Bay (right). Credit: NW Straits Foundation*

## Welcome New Snohomish MRC Members

Snohomish MRC welcomes two new members this past month. Michael Ehlebracht, a 25-year county resident and a Principal Geochemist with the engineering and scientific consulting firm Hart Crowser. Mr. Ehlebracht has been actively involved in the cleanup and restoration of contaminated waterfront properties in Puget Sound and has also served on a variety of environmental working groups. Also joining the Snohomish MRC is Michael Montanari, a Managing Partner with Coastal Tourism Research, LLC. Mike holds an a Master of Marine Affairs degree from the University of Washington, and has over 11 years experience educating students in biology, ecology, environmental science, oceanography, astronomy, and meteorology. He also brings experience in social science research methodology and the desire for sustainable tourism in the coastal zone. We extend a warm welcome to these new members!

## Olympia Oyster restoration program recognized



The Northwest Straits Foundation was honored to be designated as a beneficiary of the 16th annual Shellfish Lover's Ultimate Rejuvenation Party

– SLURP! on Sunday, April 27 in Olympia. Thanks to Ian Jefferds, owner of Penn Cove Mussels and Puget Sound Shellfish Growers Association board member for nominating the Foundation to be a recipient of proceeds from this fun event. Foundation board president, Jeff Ward, attended SLURP and commented, "We will use this \$3,000 gift to continue our restoration, protection, and education work to ensure the amazing seafood we enjoyed at the event will be available to future generations. Again, many thanks to you and the Pacific Coast Shellfish Growers Association."

*Photo: PCSGA Executive Director, Margaret Barrette, left, and board member Connie Smith, right, present a check to Jeff Ward and Jill Clark, center, of Northwest Straits Foundation at SLURP!*

## Events

**May 17, 2014 - Locust Beach Cleanup.** 1:00pm-3:00pm, Locust Beach, Bellingham. Co-sponsored by the Whatcom MRC. Join the Whatcom Marine Resources Committee, NWS Chapter Surfrider Foundation, and the North Sound Kiteboarding Association to help

cleanup Locust Beach.

**May 18, 2014 - *Whatcom Water Fest*.** 12:00pm - 4:00pm.  
Maritime Heritage Park.

**May 20, 2014 - *Salish Sea Shoreline Forum*.** 8:30am-4:00pm,  
South Seattle Community College. Free with optional \$10 lunch  
available. The topic for the forum is: New and Emerging Scientific  
Research focused on Armoring and the Nearshore: Implications for  
Implementers. Click [here](#) to register.

**May 30, 2014 - *Northwest Straits Commission Meeting*.** 10:30-  
3:30pm, Mullis Community Senior Center, Friday Harbor. Click  
[here](#) for meeting information.

**August 4-8, 2014 - *Science of Oil Spills (SOS)*.** Hosted by  
NOAA's Office of Response and Restoration. Click [here](#) for  
application information, space limited to 40 participants.

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Port Susan designated as Marine Stewardship Area, Commission elections, marine debris removal and much more!



June 2014

## Snohomish County Council Designates Port Susan as Marine Stewardship Area




The Snohomish County MRC is proud to announce the designation of Port Susan as a voluntary Marine Stewardship Area by the Snohomish County Council on May 28. This action will help future conservation efforts in the area. Paul Schlenger, Chair of the Snohomish MRC, is quoted, "The Snohomish County MRC is proud that our conservation efforts in Port Susan are endorsed by the Snohomish County Council through their approval of the resolution. We sincerely thank the Council for taking this important step and supporting the work of Snohomish MRC."

A marine stewardship area gives local authorities and marine users a framework for conservation of the natural, cultural, economic and scenic environments. It also promotes responsible, voluntary management by increasing community stewardship and issue awareness.

Port Susan borders Snohomish County on the east and Camano Island on the west, and includes the Stillaguamish River delta, marine shoreline, forests and farms. The area is home to migratory gray whales, numerous bird species, salmon, Dungeness crab and shellfish beds. The Snohomish County MRC has served as a lead for the Port Susan Marine Stewardship Area project since 2007. [Click here for more information about the project.](#)

*Photo: Port Susan Bay at sunset. Credit: Kathleen Herrmann*

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### In This Issue:

[Forage Fish Survey Workshop](#)

[Marine Debris Removal](#)

[Upcoming events](#)

### Welcome Summer Intern Emily Bishop



The Commission is pleased to welcome Emily Bishop, a student at the University of Rhode Island and recipient of

## Kelp 101 on Whidbey Island



Four lucky people joined Island MRC member and retired marine botanist Leal Dickson on a recent visit to potential survey sites for our developing kelp recovery project

([see our web site for more info](#)). Fellow MRC member Dan Matlock, summer intern Emily Bishop, Commission staffer Caroline Gibson, and pilot Gregg Ridder enjoyed a lesson on local algae and seaweeds. Though officially retired from research and academia, Leal has clearly not forgotten much when it comes to intertidal identification and trivia. We hope that Leal will lead a similar outing for interested volunteers on next month's full moon tide – stay tuned!

*Photo: Caroline Gibson, Emily Bishop, Leal Dickson, Dan Matlock on Whidbey Island. Credit: Gregg Ridder*

## Northwest Straits Commission Meeting Highlights

The Northwest Straits Commission held their May meeting in Friday Harbor, San Juan County. Much of the meeting was dedicated to a highly productive review and discussion of the 2014 Strategic Plan. Stephanie Buffum, Director of FRIENDS of the San Juans, informed the Commission about [Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas \(PSSA\)](#), an international tool that may be used to limit fossil fuel export through the Salish Sea.

An election of officers for the Commission also took place, with Christine Woodward re-elected as chair and Nan McKay elected as vice chair.

## Forage Fish Workshop

On May 17, the Northwest Straits Commission held a successful workshop attended by 13 Whatcom MRC members and other volunteers. The group was excited to find surf smelt eggs on Squalicum Beach (thanks to Dan Penttila for the heads up!). The workshop



included an overview of regional forage fish management and basic natural history, as well as standardized field sampling techniques and egg identification. This was the second training in a series offered through our [Forage Fish Program](#), in partnership with the Washington Department of

a NOAA Hollings Program Scholarship. Emily brings an impressive range of field, lab, diving and marine biology interests and experience.

With input from kelp experts around the region, Emily is now drafting a boat-based survey protocol for use by MRCs and other citizen science groups who are interested in kelp protection and recovery. Field testing will begin later this month. Thank you to Caroline Gibson, Emily's Commission staff mentor, and Dan Tonnes for serving as Emily's designated NOAA mentor during her nine weeks in Puget Sound.

*Photo: Emily Bishop shows off a Laminaria specimen. Credit: Caroline Gibson*

## Northwest Straits Foundation Internship Opportunity

The Northwest Straits Foundation is seeking applications for an intern to work closely with program staff on the derelict fishing gear program and nearshore program. The closing date is June 23. [Click here for a description and how to apply.](#)

## New to Our Library

[South Port Townsend Bay Marine Protected Area Report](#) - Jefferson MRC

[Pigeon Guillemot Study](#) - Island MRC



Fish and Wildlife and the Department of Natural Resources/Aquatic Reserve Program. Presentations and survey protocols are on the Commission's website. Please contact [Caroline Gibson](#) at for additional information.

*Photo: Forage fish workshop participants. Credit: Elizabeth Kilanowski*

## Marine Debris Removal in Port Susan Bay



Paul Argites, staff at Northwest Straits Commission is looking for shoreline areas in need of clean up. In early June, he sent two Veteran Conservation Corps crews to

remove marine debris along a two-mile stretch of shoreline at Port Susan Bay after discovering a significant accumulation and coordinating with willing landowners. The crews removed 3,020 pounds of debris from the Leque Island Wildlife Area and the wetlands surrounding Davis Slough. Much of the debris removed consisted of plastic fragments and beverage bottles as well as larger items including refrigerators, car tires, and rigid Styrofoam blocks originating from a derelict dock broken apart near Davis Slough. [See our web site for more information](#) on the marine debris project.

*Photo: Veteran Conservation Corps crew members remove marine debris. Credit: Paul Argites*

## Events

**June 16, 2014 - Forage Fish Survey Workshop.** 10am-2:30pm, NOAA Mukilteo Field Station. \*THIS WORKSHOP IS CURRENTLY FULL.\*

**June 17, 2014 - Diggin' for Dinner - Learn about Clams and Beach Stewardship.** 12:00pm-2:00pm, Oak Bay County Park. Co-sponsored by the Jefferson MRC, [see flyer for more details](#) and registration.

**June 25, 2014 - Discovery Bay Olympia Oyster Relocation Project.** 8:00am-11:00am, Discovery Bay. Co-sponsored by WDFW and Jefferson Marine Resources Committee. A few more volunteers are needed to help move Olympia oysters safely out of the way so NOSC can proceed with the Maynard Beach nearshore habitat restoration in Discovery Bay. Email [Cheryl Lowe](#) to sign up.

**June 27, 2014 - Northwest Straits Commission meeting.** 10:00am-12:00pm, WebEx conference call. [Agenda and meeting information can be found on our web site.](#)

**June 28, 2014 - Living with the Coast: A Workshop for Marine Shoreline Landowners in Whatcom County.** 1:00pm-4:30pm, Blaine Boating Center. Sponsored by the Whatcom MRC. [See flyer for details](#)

**Shannon Point Riprap Removal** - Skagit MRC

**New Report Online**

Vessel Traffic Risk Assessment (VTRA) 2010 Final Report - Click here for [executive summary](#) or [full report](#).

and sign up information.

**June-Sept, 2014 - *The Climate Action Imperative: 2014 Summer***

**Speaker Series.** 7:00pm-8:00pm, various locations on San Juan Island.

Co-sponsored by the San Juan MRC. [See flyer for details](#).

- June 18 - Impacts on Forests: Dr. Richard Hebda
- June 25 - Impacts on Oceans: Dr. Jan Newton
- July 10 - Impacts on Food: Chad Kruger
- July 24 - Impact Adaptation: Lara Whitely Binder
- July 31 - Impacts on Weather: Dr. Nicholas Bond
- August 7 - Impacts on Glaciers: Rebecca Lofgren
- August 20 - Impacts on Coasts: Dr. Steven Fradkin
- August 28 - Impacts on Pacific NW: Dr. Philip Mote
- September 10 - TBD: Senator Kevin Ranker and special guest

**July 25, 2014 - *Northwest Straits Commission meeting*.** 10:00am-3:00pm, Service Alternatives Building, Coupeville. [Agenda and meeting information can be found on our web site.](#)

**August 4-8, 2014 - *Science of Oil Spills (SOS)*.** Hosted by NOAA's Office of Response and Restoration. [Click here for application information](#), space limited to 40 participants.

**December 5-6, 2014 - *MRC Conference*.** Northwest Maritime Center, Port Townsend.

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Read about our summer events on the beach and a new kelp survey program for volunteers!



July 2014

## Kelp Monitoring Project Presentation July 25 in Coupeville

Concern over the decline of bull kelp has sparked an effort to monitor this species, which is of great ecological and cultural importance to Puget Sound. The Commission is in the process of developing a small boat-based monitoring protocol, as a tool for MRCs to track changes in local bull kelp presence over time. Join us for the **July 25 Commission meeting in Coupeville**.



Emily Bishop will share information about major aspects of the protocol, and results of initial field trials with MRC volunteers in Island and Jefferson counties.

*Photo: Jefferson MRC member, Tony Petrillo, tests his idea for a kayak-towed quadrat. Credit: Emily Bishop*

## Discovery Bay Olympia Oyster Relocation



shells and rocks the oysters were attached to within the proposed construction zone, and placed them into tidal channels that would not be disturbed during the construction phase.

Volunteers from the Jefferson MRC, Beach Watchers and WDFW relocated more than 5,000 oysters in an Olympia oyster "rescue mission" on June 25th, to move them out of harm's way prior to a major nearshore restoration project. The volunteers collected the old

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### In This Issue

**Beach cleanups**

**Kelp Monitoring**

**Upcoming Events**

### Read More

**More information about these and other programs is on our web site at [www.nwstraits.org](http://www.nwstraits.org)**

## Snohomish MRC Resolution Renewed by County

Great news for the Snohomish Marine Resources Program! On July 2, the Snohomish County Council voted unanimously on Ordinance 14-044 to reenact the MRC and remove the sunset clause from County Code. County Council chair Dave Somers spoke highly of the MRC,

The project involves removing riprap and an old creosote railroad trestle as well as lowering the height of the railroad berm to allow tidal overwash into the adjacent lagoon, to enhance habitat for salmon and forage fish. Restoration work at the site is being led by the North Olympic Salmon Coalition. [Read more about the project on the Jefferson MRC web site.](#)

*Photo: Shell covered in small Olympia oysters being relocated by volunteer.  
Credit: Cheryl Lowe*

## Clallam MRC Internship Program Engages Community in 4th of July Activities



The new Clallam MRC internship program is off to a great start. Emily Larson, outreach and education intern, and Sarah McDougald, marine debris intern, staffed an outreach table at the Feiro Marine Life Center in Port Angeles on July 4 with marine and tsunami debris information, Elwha dam removal updates and a kid's activity aimed at beach cleanup education. Tori Cantalow, the MRC's Olympia oyster restoration intern, gave a presentation entitled "Washington's Lost Oysters," which told the story of Olympia oysters and current restoration efforts in Sequim Bay by the MRC and Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe. The following day, volunteers gathered on Ediz Hook for a beach cleanup organized by Emily, where they filled garbage bags with copious amounts of firework debris and other garbage. The MRC has a fourth intern, Loretta Creasey, who is focused on oil spill prevention and response.

*Photo: Beach Cleanup crew on Ediz Hook, Clallam County*

## Whirlwind Beach Cleanup

July 5th beach cleanups have been organized annually for the last decade in Whatcom County to clean up the aftermath of Independence Day celebrations. Whirlwind Beach, a



noting that "the MRC does a great job pulling resources and volunteers together. This mechanism has worked really well, particularly in Snohomish County, to mobilize people around these important issues. It is very action-oriented and has been a great asset and benefit." Congratulations to the Snohomish MRC, and keep up the good work!



## Welcome New Program Intern

Jason Morgan is working under a full time internship to support the Derelict Fishing Gear and Nearshore Restoration Programs for the Northwest Straits Foundation. During his six years in commercial fisheries management, Jason gained extensive field experience in the West Coast Groundfish Observer Program, and was a key component to the successful start of the IFQ Catch Monitor Program. In addition to a busy professional life, he is an active volunteer devoting time to community outreach and environmental stewardship programs.

popular local beach

for kiteboarding, skimboarding, dog walking and bird watching has been the main focus of these cleanups.

This year, the [Whatcom MRC](#) partnered with the Surfrider Foundation and the North Sound Kiteboarding Association to host a series of beach cleanups as part of the Whirlwind Beach Community Stewardship Program. Whirlwind Beach, formerly known as Locust Beach, is one of the few local sandy beaches, providing a unique opportunity to balance recreational use with habitat preservation for wildlife such as birds and forage fish.

This year's cleanup included over twenty volunteers who braved scattered showers for the event. Fireworks contain hazardous and toxic chemicals, as well as heavy metals, that are important to remove from the beaches for their human and environmental health impacts. Since fireworks were banned this year in Bellingham, the amount of debris left to be cleaned up (roughly 100 pounds) was far less than in past years, when more than half-a-ton of garbage was laboriously hauled off the beach and up the steep trail for truck collection. The MRC plans to continue efforts to engage the community in beach stewardship.

*Photo: Whirlwind beach debris. Credit: Eleanor Hines*

## Diggin' for Dinner



On June 17, the [Jefferson MRC](#) co-sponsored a collaborative public education program on clam harvesting called "Diggin' for Dinner." WDFW staff provided instruction to 42 enthusiastic attendees, and everyone came away with new knowledge about sustainable clam harvesting, the connection between water quality and shellfish, as well as

their daily limit of delicious clams!

A second event will be held on July 26, [click here for more information](#).

*Photo: Clams harvested at Diggin' for Dinner! Credit: Cheryl Lowe*

## Boulevard Park West Beach Intertidal Survey

On June 14 and 15, Whatcom MRC members and citizen volunteers conducted an intertidal survey at Boulevard Park along the southeastern edge of Bellingham Bay. This was the first survey conducted since the City of Bellingham completed a shoreline modification project to remove ineffective armoring and construct gravel and sand beaches and drift sills. The goal of this intertidal monitoring was to document changes over time in

## Recent Articles

[Fishing for Crab Pots](#) - Port Townsend Leader, July 2, 2014

[Volunteers track beach health at Boulevard Pary in second year of study](#) - Bellingham Herald, June 19, 2014

[Guillemot surveys are important reminders](#) - South Whidbey Record, July 8, 2014



beach slope, substrate, and biodiversity and determine the extent to which the park's beaches are changing. Most of the sampling protocol and procedures were based on the work of the Island County MRC/WSU Beach Watchers. Basic training was provided by RE Source staff, primarily targeting citizen scientist volunteers from Cherry Point Aquatic Reserve citizen stewardship committees. The data will be useful for determining the advantages of soft shore over hard shore armoring as it provides easier access for recreational use and improvement of physical processes. [Click here to read a feature article](#) in the Bellingham Herald.

## Marine Debris Removal Update



At the end of June, Washington Conservation Corps crew members worked with Northwest Straits Commission staff to remove 3,740 pounds of marine debris from Port Susan Bay and Skagit Bay tidelands. The WCC

crew managed to fill a 20-cubic yard dumpster with debris, mostly large Styrofoam blocks and small plastic fragments. Four additional pickup truckloads of tires and creosote-treated wood were taken to the local transfer station for proper disposal. If you know of a Puget Sound beach that is in need of cleanup work, please contact Paul Argites at [argites@nwstraits.org](mailto:argites@nwstraits.org) or 360-853-5387. More information about the Marine Debris Program is available on our [web site](#).

*Photo: WCC crew members haul debris from Snohomish and Skagit counties. Credit: Paul Argites*

## Events

**July 13, 2014 - Beach Naturalists at Washington Park.** 1:00-1:45pm, Washington Park, Anacortes. Skagit MRC Beach Naturalists will share some of their favorite animals and plants that live among the rocks at Sunset Beach. [More details here](#). The Beach Naturalists will also be at Anacortes' Sunset Beach for informal interpretation of the beach life on multiple weekends in June and July! [See web site](#) for schedule.

**July 19-20, 2014 - 35th Annual Birch Bay Discovery Days.** 10:00am-7:00pm, Gold Star Resorts, Birch Bay. Fun activities abound with a grand parade down Birch Bay Drive, arts and crafts fair, kite flying on the beach, clamming, wake boarding and more. Bring the entire family and don't miss the [Ducky Derby Race](#). The Whatcom MRC will be tabling at the event with displays and kids activities.

**July 26, 2014 - Diggin' for Dinner.** 10:00am, Indian Island County Park (North Lagoon Beach). Learn how to dig clams safely and sustainably and the connection between water quality and shellfish. To reserve your space and for more information, contact [WSU Extension](#) or call (360) 379-5610 ext. 200. [Click here for more details](#) on this FREE event.

**June-Sept, 2014 - *The Climate Action Imperative: 2014***

**Summer Speaker Series.** 7:00pm-8:00pm, various locations on San Juan Island. Co-sponsored by the San Juan MRC. See [flyer](#) for details.

**August 4-8, 2014 - *Science of Oil Spills (SOS)*.** Hosted by NOAA's Office of Response and Restoration. [Click here](#) for application information, space limited to 40 participants.

**September 5-7, 2014 - *38th Annual Wooden Boat Festival*.** Northwest Maritime Center, Port Townsend, WA. Booth hosted by Jefferson MRC and multiple project partners. [See web site](#) for more details.

**September 6-20, 2014 - *Whatcom Water Weeks*.** Bellingham, WA. Oyster Fest kickoff event will be held at Bellwood Acres on Sept. 6. More details forthcoming!

**September 10, 2014 - *Marine Managers and Shellfish Growers***

**Workshop.** Friday Harbor, San Juan Island. Ocean acidification speakers, panel discussion and more. Details will be forthcoming.

**September 13, 2014 - *Fidalgo Bay Day*.** 11:00am-3:00pm, Fidalgo Bay RV Resort in Anacortes. Celebrate the beauty, history and marine life of Fidalgo Bay - A free, fun and educational experience for the entire family! Sponsored by Skagit MRC, [click here for more information](#).

**September 18, 2014 - *Cornet Bay Shoreline Restoration Celebration*.**

Cornet Bay, Deception Pass State Park. Join project funders and partners to celebrate completion of the initial phase of a three-part nearshore restoration effort. Co-hosted by Northwest Straits Foundation and Island MRC. Everyone is invited to attend this free event. Please RSVP to [Heidi Lehman](#). [Click here for more details](#).

**October 7, 2014 - *Ocean Health Forum*.** 6:30pm-8:00pm, Northwest Maritime Center, Port Townsend, WA. Free public event. Sponsored by the Northwest Straits Commission and the Jefferson MRC.

**October 9, 2014 - *Ocean Health Forum*.** 6:30pm-8:00pm, Whidbey Telecom Building, Freeland, WA. Free public event. Sponsored by the Northwest Straits Commission and the Island MRC.

**December 5-6, 2014 - *16th Annual MRC Conference*.** Northwest Maritime Center, Port Townsend, WA. [See web site](#) for details.

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Mark your calendar for upcoming events like Oyster Fest Northwest and Fidalgo Bay Day!



## Olympia Oyster Habitat Enhancement



Olympia oysters have a new place in Discovery Bay to call "home". On August 9, Jefferson MRC volunteers placed oyster shells to create a half-acre of new habitat at the south end of Discovery Bay. The MRC is testing a low-impact technique for Olympia Oyster habitat restoration in coordination with Washington Dept of Fish and Wildlife and support from Taylor Shellfish, Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe and Port Discovery Seafarms.

The goal is to encourage expansion of a small but thriving Olympia oyster population at Discovery Bay that was previously planted by the MRC. The Tribe donated use of their boat and crew to move eight cubic yards of bagged shell to the project area on the previous day's high tide. MRC and Beach Watcher volunteers walked out at low tide to thinly scatter Pacific oyster shells and two small plots of crushed shell on the tideflats across the Bay from the existing population, avoiding eelgrass as they worked. Oyster larvae should settle on the new shell next spring, and the population is expected to slowly expand. Learn more about Jefferson MRC's oyster restoration work [on their web site](#).

*Photo: MRC and Beach Watcher volunteers scatter oyster shells on Discovery Bay. Credit: Tori Cantelow*

## Beach Naturalists Plant the Seeds of Stewardship

## August 2014



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[MRC Project Updates](#)

[New Kelp Survey Protocol](#)

[NWSC Meeting Review](#)

[Upcoming Events](#)



## Northwest Straits Commission Meeting

Island County hosted the July meeting of the Northwest Straits Commission. Helen Price Johnson, Island County Commissioner, welcomed the group and expressed her gratitude for the work of the Commission and local MRC. Meeting highlights included information on the Island MRC phytoremediation





Washington Park's Sunset Beach in Anacortes is a small stretch of cobble shoreline that provides more than just a beautiful view. Visitors ranging from excited schoolchildren, weekend locals, and summer campers come to the park to explore and experience the nearshore habitat. Skagit MRC recruited and trained ten very enthusiastic volunteers in the spring of 2014 to educate visitors about local intertidal marine life and how to reduce recreational impacts. Throughout the summer, this team of trained Beach Naturalists has been sharing their passion for the marine environment through a series of interpretive programs at the beach. The programs are tailored to engage citizens of all ages and promote personal connections to the marine environment that will hopefully last a lifetime. After all, isn't that what stewardship is about? For more information, [check out their web site](#) or contact the Skagit Beach Naturalist Coordinator, [Nancy Olsen](#).

*Photo: Future stewards get a close up of marine critters. Credit: Nancy Olson*

### Marine Debris Removal Program Update



In mid-July, the Northwest Straits Commission partnered with the Washington Conservation Corps (WCC), Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe and Jefferson Land Trust to remove accumulations of marine debris from Sequim and Quilcene Bays. The WCC Veteran's Crew removed 2,160 pounds of debris including oyster seed bags, shellfish aquaculture nets, large styrofoam blocks, and car tires used as shoreline armoring. Special thanks to Jefferson County MRC member Ralph Riccio for coordinating project logistics.

project, a presentation of the newly-developed kelp survey protocol, and an update on southern resident killer whales from Lynne Barre at NOAA.

The next Commission meeting will be held on August 22 from 10am-12pm via WebEx, [click here](#) for meeting information.

*Photo: The full Commission in Coupeville. Credit: Sasha Horst*



### Snohomish MRC Supports Local Speed-Crabbing Derby

Snohomish MRC members and staff recently attended the 2nd Annual Puget Sound Speed Crabbing Derby at the Everett Marina. Participants competed in teams to weigh-in the 10 heaviest Dungeness crabs caught during a set time period. The MRC provided assistance at the weigh station, measuring crabs and testing shell hardness, and educating participants on local regulations and best practices. The MRC also distributed recreational



Our Marine Debris Program Coordinator Paul Argites is always on the lookout for new project sites. If you know of a Puget Sound beach in need of cleanup work please contact [Paul Argites](#) or (360) 853-5387. More information about the Marine Debris Program can be found [on our web site](#).

*Photo: WCC Veteran's Crew remove debris in Quilcene Bay.  
Credit: Paul Argites*

### **Hello Kelp Survey Protocol, Goodbye Emily!**



The Northwest Straits Commission recently hosted NOAA Hollings Scholar Emily Bishop, a University of Rhode Island student. During her nine-week internship with the Commission, Emily successfully developed a boat-based survey protocol for bull kelp in Puget Sound, with input from kelp experts around the region. The protocol will be used as a monitoring tool by Marine Resources Committees and other citizen science groups who are interested in kelp protection and recovery. Field testing will continue through October. Emily's final project and draft protocol was presented to the Northwest Straits Commission on July 25 and to the Hollings Program staff and award recipients at NOAA Headquarters on July 29. The final draft of the protocol will be available soon. Emily was mentored by Northwest Straits Commission Marine Program Manager Caroline Gibson and Dan Tonnes from NOAA Fisheries.

*Photo: Emily Bishop testing out her kelp survey draft protocol.  
Credit: Maureen Goff*

### **MRC Picnic and Meadowdale restoration site visit**

crabber education packets during registration and displayed the MRC's crabber education booth. Learn more about how to keep your pots and eat more crab [on their web site](#).

*Photo: MRC member, Brent Hackney, measuring crab shells at the derby. Credit: Alyson Rae*



Last month, Snohomish MRC combined their annual picnic with a field visit to Meadowdale Park, where the MRC is teaming up with the Snohomish County Parks Department to conduct a feasibility study to look at a variety of options to improve public access to the beach, and improve fish and nearshore habitat. Currently both people and fish have to travel through a culvert under the railroad tracks to access the beach.

Snohomish County Councilmember Stephanie Wright attended the tour along with Snohomish County Park Director, Tom Teigen, and Park Staff Logan Daniels and Sharon Swan. Ranger Doug Dailer was also at the event to help coordinate logistics and provide local knowledge. Councilmember Wright expressed appreciation for the work of the MRC to help move important nearshore projects, such as this one, forward.

*Photo: Snohomish MRC members receive a tour of future restoration site. Credit: Holly Faulstich*

## Events

**June-Sept, 2014 - *The Climate Action Imperative: 2014 Summer Speaker Series.*** 7:00pm-8:00pm, various locations on San Juan Island. Co-sponsored by the San Juan MRC. See [flyer](#) for details.

- August 20 - Impacts on Coasts: Dr. Steven Fradkin
- August 28 - Impacts on Pacific NW: Dr. Philip Mote
- September 10 - Senator Kevin Ranker

### **September 5-7, 2014 - *38th Annual Wooden Boat Festival.***

Northwest Maritime Center, Port Townsend, WA. Booth hosted by Jefferson MRC and multiple project partners. [See web site](#) for more details.

**September 6, 2014 - *Oyster Fest Northwest!*** 12:00 pm - 4:00 pm, Bellewood Acres, Bellingham. Join the Whatcom MRC at Bellewood Acres for Oyster Fest Northwest to celebrate the kick-off of 2014 Whatcom Water Weeks! FREE entry for all. Advance tasting tickets (for food, beer, and spirits) are \$20 and can be purchased [online here](#). At the door, tickets are \$24. [See web site](#) for more details.

**September 6-20, 2014 - Whatcom Water Weeks.** Bellingham, WA. Whatcom Water Weeks is a two week long event that celebrates our local water resources. Stay tuned for announcements for specific MRC events including an interpretive beach walk and a beach cleanup party at Whirlwind Beach. Co-sponsored by the Whatcom MRC, [see web site](#) for more details.

**September 10, 2014 - Marine Managers and Shellfish Growers Workshop.** Friday Harbor, San Juan Island. Ocean acidification speakers, panel discussion and more. Details will be forthcoming.

**September 10, 2014 - San Juan Island Reception.** 5:00 pm - 6:30 pm, San Juan Community Theatre, Friday Harbor. Join Northwest Straits Foundation and San Juan MRC for a meet & greet preceding Senator Kevin Ranker's talk wrapping up the Climate Action summer speaker series. For more information and to RSVP contact [Heidi Lehman](#) at 360-733-1725.

**September 13, 2014 - Fidalgo Bay Day.** 11:00am-3:00pm, Fidalgo Bay RV Resort in Anacortes. Celebrate the beauty, history and marine life of Fidalgo Bay - A free, fun and educational experience for the entire family! Sponsored by Skagit MRC, [click here for more](#).

**September 18, 2014 - Cornet Bay Shoreline Restoration Celebration.** Cornet Bay, Deception Pass State Park. Join project funders and partners to celebrate completion of the initial phase of a three-part nearshore restoration effort. Co-hosted by Northwest Straits Foundation, WA State Parks and Island MRC. Everyone is invited to attend this free event. Please RSVP to [Heidi Lehman](#). [Click here for more details](#).

**October 7, 2014 - Ocean Health Forum.** 6:30pm-8:00pm, Northwest Maritime Center, Port Townsend, WA. NOAA, Puget Sound Restoration Fund and Climate Action Committee will be represented. Free public event.

**December 5-6, 2014 - 16th Annual MRC Conference.** Northwest Maritime Center, Port Townsend, WA. [See web site](#) for details.

Interesting read in the *Salish Sea Currents* magazine about eelgrass recovery. [Check it out here!](#)

*MRC projects are funded wholly or in part by the United States Environmental Protection Agency.*

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Mark your calendar for upcoming events like the Whirlwind Beach Cleanup and Ocean Health Forum!



## Skagit County Fidalgo Bay Day



Skagit MRC and their partners held the 11th annual Fidalgo Bay Day on Saturday, September 13, hosted by the Samish Indian Nation at their beachfront convention center. This one-day event is held annually to increase public awareness of the marine environment and encourage people to become good stewards of Fidalgo Bay and the Salish Sea. Over 330 participants attended, with local residents joined by visitors from near and far. Displays and demonstrations organized as part of National Estuaries Day were set up along the Tommy Thompson trail leading to the Fidalgo Bay event.


In addition to all the excellent informational displays inside the convention center, there were tables setup for kids to play games and express their creative talents making buttons, prints, and other "marine oriented" items, and the Samish Indian Nation offered rides to all the guests in one of their beautiful canoes. Dan Penttila and Paul Dinnel led a beach seining activity, during which kids and parents alike were excited to see what was found in the net. Dan and Paul identified and provided fun facts about each creature before releasing them back to the bay. Three local restaurateurs offered free samples of their outstanding chowders, rounded out by oysters and clams donated by Taylor Shellfish and brownies donated by Gere-a-Deli. [Click here](#) to learn more about the Skagit MRC.

*Photo: Beach seining demonstration and Samish traditional canoe rides at Fidalgo Bay Day.  
Credit: Paul Dinnel*

## Marine Debris Cleanup

During the first week of September, the Washington Conservation Corps Veteran's Crew and

## September 2014

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## Forage Fish and Food Webs



As of this week, Holly Faulstich, Program Coordinator for the





Northwest Straits Commission staff removed 1,460 pounds of marine debris from Whidbey Island shoreline. The crew focused their efforts on removing accumulations of creosote-treated wood debris, plastic fragments, large styrofoam blocks, and

shellfish aquaculture gear. The Washington Conservation Corps 2013-2014 term is coming to a close at the end of this month, and a new round of WCC Veteran's crew members will begin their one-year term in October. More information about the Marine Debris Program can be found [on our web site](#).

**Many thanks to all the 2013-14 WCC members who worked with us to remove 9.7 tons of marine debris from Puget Sound shoreline!**

*Photo: WCC Veteran Crew members remove marine debris from Whidbey Island shores.  
Credit: Paul Argites*

### Jefferson MRC Port Townsend Wooden Boat Festival

The 38th annual Wooden Boat Festival in Port Townsend drew an estimated 30,000 visitors on September 5-7, providing the Jefferson MRC another great opportunity to share its work with the community. Their interactive booth attracts people to learn about the MRC's voluntary eelgrass and shellfish protection zones, as well as Olympia oyster and beach restoration projects.

This year the MRC offered a *Community Survey on Marine Issues*, which was a great conversation starter. MRC volunteers were impressed by the number of visitors who were already informed, and survey responses ranked pollution prevention as the most important issue, with ocean acidification coming in second. The addition of "talking bubbles" to a photo panel lent a touch of humor. [Click here](#) to learn more about the Jefferson MRC.

*Photo: Jefferson MRC's new photo panel with "talking bubbles." Credit: Cheryl Lowe*



### 2014 Whatcom Water Weeks Kicks Off!

Whatcom Water Weeks is an annual two-week series of events that celebrate local water resources, held this year from September 6-20. To kick off Whatcom Water Weeks, the

Northwest Straits Commission, will also be staffing the regional Working Group on Forage Fish and Food Webs, part of the Puget Sound Ecosystem Monitoring Program (PSEMP). This is a great regional forum for discussion of forage fish monitoring and related issues. Caroline Gibson will continue membership in the work group on behalf of the Northwest Straits Commission. PSEMP is designed to evaluate progress towards ecosystem recovery and to serve as a foundation to continually improve the scientific basis for management actions in the Puget Sound. Holly is looking forward to reconvening the group and helping define a collective vision for the path forward! [Click here](#) for more information about forage fish.

### Marine Managers and Shellfish Growers Workshop

On Wednesday, September 10, the San Juan MRC hosted a workshop for local shellfish growers and marine managers. Convened by the MRC, with support from the Northwest Straits Initiative, Puget Sound Partnership and Charlotte Martin Foundation, shellfish growers and marine managers met all day to discuss changing ocean conditions and how they impact local shellfish growers and marine management.

All of the workshop leaders agreed that solutions begin with knowledge and education. "It's within our power to make positive changes," said Dr. Terrie Klinger, who is also a Northwest Straits Commissioner. "We here in the San Juan Islands and Washington State have a great



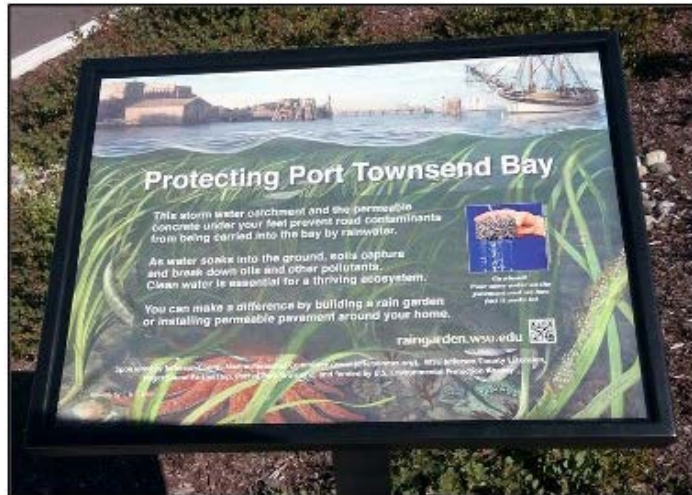
Whatcom MRC co-hosted two events, including the inaugural Oysterfest Northwest at Bellewood Acres on September 6 and Bounty on the Beach, a guided exploration for tideland treasures at Birch Bay, on September 7. These free events provided an opportunity to share information with community members about our marine and fresh water resources and the important role water plays in our lives. [Click here](#) for more

information about Water Weeks activities.

*Photo: Jack Louws, Whatcom County Executive, and Wayne Drop, Whatcom Water Weeks mascot enjoy Oysterfest Northwest. Credit: Austin Rose*

## Low Impact Development Signage Installed in Jefferson County

Jefferson MRC recently completed and installed an interpretive sign for a new landscape feature constructed by the Port of Port Townsend in Boat Haven. The colorful sign highlights the Low Impact Development (LID) strategies being demonstrated on the site, such as porous concrete and rain gardens. The MRC is now gathering information about the effectiveness of the sign by using a survey that sign readers can access on their mobile devices using a QR code.



*Photo: Jefferson MRC's new LID/rain garden interpretive sign. Credit: Bob Simmons*

## Northwest Straits in the News

**[Cornet Bay Celebration Set for Thursday](#)** - Whidbey News-Times, September 17, 2014

**[Diving for Debris: Washington's Success Story in Fishing Nets out of the Ocean](#)** - NOAA Office of Response and Restoration, September 2, 2014

**[Washington State Sen. Kevin Ranker one of keynote speakers, Climate Action Summer Speaker Series](#)** - Journal of the San Juans, August 30, 2014

responsibility not to fail. We can make a difference."

The **San Juan MRC** will post the lecture presentations from the workshop to their web site within the next month.

## Job Announcement



The Padilla Bay Foundation, in partnership with Skagit Marine Resources Committee and other marine resource organizations, is seeking a full-time Volunteer Program and Project Coordinator to organize, train and implement volunteer efforts in the marine waters of Skagit County and related watersheds. [See full job announcement here.](#)

[Olympia Oysters Invited to Discovery Bay](#) - Port Townsend Leader, August 20, 2014

## New to the Library

[Boat-Based Survey Protocol for Bull Kelp in Puget Sound](#) - Emily Bishop, NOAA Hollings Scholar. August 2014.

[Recent History and Near Future of Beach Cleanups on the Strait of Juan de Fuca within Clallam County](#) - Jon Schmidt, Washington CoastSavers Coordinator. August 2014. Marine debris cleanup analysis commissioned by the Clallam MRC.

[2012/13 Mussel Watch Pilot Expansion Project Report](#) - Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife. September 2014. In the winter of 2012-13 citizen science volunteers, including those from San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish and Whatcom MRCs helped the WA Dept of Fish & Wildlife conduct the first Puget Sound-wide assessment of toxic contaminants in nearshore biota. The findings show that toxic contaminants are entering our nearshore marine food webs, especially along shorelines next to highly urbanized areas. The data gained from this study is especially revealing for petroleum hydrocarbons, a class of contaminants of concern for the Salish Sea, but difficult to measure in fish and mammals.

## Upcoming Events

**September 20, 2014 - Whirlwind Beach Cleanup.** 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm, Bellingham, WA. Join the Whatcom MRC, Surfrider Foundation, and North Sound Kiteboarding Association to clean up Whirlwind Beach.

**September 24, 2014 - Septic System Workshop.** 5:30pm - 7:30pm, Bellingham, WA. Invitations for this workshop will be sent out to residents in the Chuckanut Village as part of the MRC's PIC project funded by the Whatcom Assistance Program. The FREE workshop will be led by James Hayes, Whatcom County Health Department.

**September 26-27, 2014 - Dungeness River Festival.** 10:00am - 4:00pm, Dungeness River Audubon Center, Sequim, WA. Visit the Clallam MRC's booth at this FREE, family-friendly event. Don't miss out on kissing a geoduck! [See poster for more details.](#)

**October 7, 2014 - Ocean Health Forum.** 6:30pm-8:00pm, Northwest Maritime Center, Port Townsend, WA. NOAA, Puget Sound Restoration Fund and Climate Action Committee will be represented. Free public event, [see flyer for more details.](#)

**November 13, 2014 - State of the Bay Research Symposium.** Bellingham Cruise Terminal, Fairhaven. The Symposium will bring together researchers, managers, and interested citizens to broaden our understanding of the vital resource that is Bellingham Bay and explore opportunities to enhance communication/coordination in order to protect it for future generations. FREE but limited to first 150 people. [See web site](#) for more details and registration.

**December 5-6, 2014 - 16th Annual MRC Conference.** Northwest Maritime Center, Port Townsend, WA. [See web site](#) for details.

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Check out our new web site at [www.nwstraits.org](http://www.nwstraits.org)!



October 2014


## Ocean Health Forum a Great Success



Ninety people came out to learn about ocean health from an awesome panel of speakers in Port Townsend on October 7. The **Community Forum on Ocean Health** focused on the science of changing ocean chemistry, its effects on sea life, and what is being done locally to combat the problem. Links to the speakers' presentations are at the bottom of our [Ocean Acidification](#) page. This event was organized by Northwest Straits Commission, in partnership with the Jefferson Marine Resources Committee and Puget Sound Restoration Fund. Thanks to all who helped make it such a success!

*Forum speakers (left to right): Dr. Simone Alin, Betsy Peabody, Cindy Jayne, Jean Walat. Credit: Holly Faulstich*

## New Web Sites Launched!

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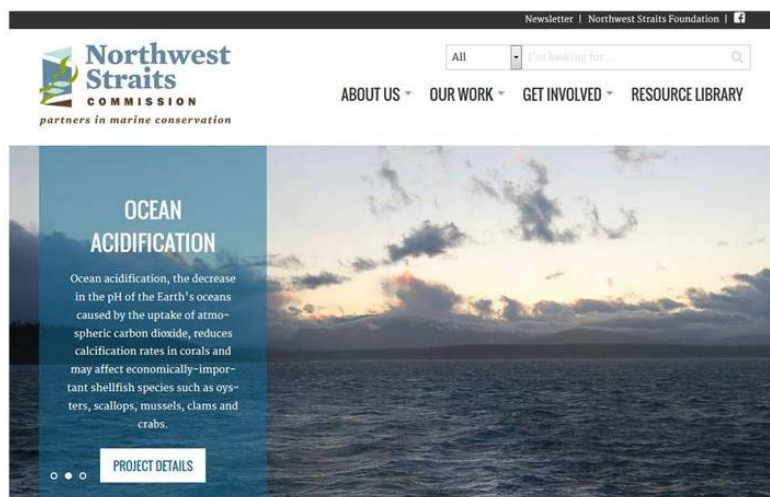
[Upcoming Events](#)



## Welcome, Dr. Ron Thom!

At its September meeting in Bellingham, the Northwest Straits Commission welcomed Dr. Ron Thom as an alternate on the Commission. Ron is a former





Check out our new web site [www.nwstraits.org](http://www.nwstraits.org). In fact, try it on your phone and tablet and tell us how it works for you! We hope you like the new look and improved compatibility on mobile devices.

The Clallam MRC also launched a **new** site at a **new** address: [www.clallamcountymrc.org](http://www.clallamcountymrc.org). Let us know what you think and share the address with others!

### Transboundary Partnership for Kelp Recovery



The Northwest Straits Commission has launched the **Salish Sea International Kelp Alliance**, which aims to advance the protection and recovery of kelp populations. Many people around the Salish Sea are exploring innovative

uses of kelp and methods to protect and restore some of the 24 species in this region. This new alliance is committed to raising awareness about the importance of kelp in marine ecosystems and native cultures, while promoting citizen science contributions to research. We are pleased to welcome Puget Sound Restoration Fund as a charter member. Learn more about the Commission's work on kelp recovery on our [web site](#).

*Left: SSIKA logo by Holly Faulstich*

### Derelict Vessel Removal in Snohomish County

member of the Commission's Science Team and the Clallam MRC, and brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise in coastal and estuarine ecosystems. A prolific author, he serves on the board of the Washington State Academy of Sciences and leads the Coastal Ecosystem Research technical group at the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory in Sequim.

### Strategic Plan Adopted

The new **Northwest Straits Initiative Strategic Plan** is available on our web site. [Click here to read it](#). It incorporates projects and actions from seven MRCs, the Northwest Straits Commission and the Northwest Straits Foundation. This plan will be "live" for a few months so that project ideas can continue to be added through the end of January 2015.



### New Resource for MRCs and Other Groups in Puget Sound



Snohomish County MRC staff and members recently worked with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to support removal of seven derelict vessels from Deadwater and Ebey Sloughs in the Snohomish River. The removals addressed a pollution and habitat concern that has plagued the Snohomish River estuary for years. This partnership between the MRC, Snohomish County Public Works, Snohomish County Sheriff's Department and DNR provided almost \$400,000 in state funds carry out the removal operations.

To learn more about the work of Snohomish MRC, visit their web site at [www.snocomrc.org](http://www.snocomrc.org). For more information about the DNR Derelict Vessel Removal Program, [click here](#).

*Photo: A derelict vessel that was recently removed from the Snohomish River. Credit: Snohomish County Marine Services Unit.*

### Whirlwind Beach Cleanup



To celebrate the closing of the 2014 **Whatcom Water Weeks** and **International Coastal Cleanup Day** on September 20, the Whatcom MRC and the Surfrider Foundation hosted a beach cleanup at Whirlwind Beach in Bellingham, Whatcom County. Volunteers conducted beach litter surveys to

A new online 'toolbox' is available for shoreline restoration projects of all sizes and shapes. MRC members and other restoration practitioners will find it a useful guide for determining what to monitor in the course of a project, and how to collect the necessary data. The toolbox includes key references such as SoundIQ, and the survey protocols for floating kelp and forage fish developed in coordination with MRCs.

[Check it out here!](#)

document the quantity and type of litter collected and will make that data available on the [MRC web site](#). As Whirlwind Beach becomes more accessible to the public, these organizations are working to foster a community-wide sense of stewardship to protect the future enjoyment of this beautiful area. The next cleanup is scheduled for ***Make a Difference Day*** on October 25.

*Photo: Smiling volunteers participate in Whirlwind Beach cleanup. Credit: Austin Rose.*

## **Clallam MRC at the Dungeness River Festival**



Who wants to kiss a geoduck? Clallam MRC members once again encouraged children to get close and plant kisses on geoducks at the 15th Annual Dungeness River Festival. This event drew more than 2,750 people to celebrate the watershed and estuary and recognize the 50th anniversary of the federal Wilderness Act. School children attend on Friday with their schools and additional visitors participated on Saturday.

At the popular Clallam MRC booth, event-goers could "kiss" a geoduck and receive a sticker. MRC members also shared information about their work on various projects, such as Olympia oyster restoration and beach cleanups. Learn more about the work of the Clallam MRC on their new web site at [www.clallamcountymrc.org](http://www.clallamcountymrc.org).

*Photo: MRC member, Lyn Muench, shows off a geoduck to interested students. Credit: Cindy LoPiccolo.*

## **Northwest Straits in the News**

**Scientists say 'ocean degradation is a fact'** - Islands' Weekly, October 4, 2014. Article about San Juan MRC's Marine Managers Workshop.

**Everett's boat graveyard, Steamboat Slough** - Seattle P-I, October 3, 2014. More photos of derelict vessels that Snohomish MRC is helping to remove.

**Stewards of the Deep** - Islands' Sounder, October 7, 2014. Article about the REEF program's online database of marine sightings. SeaDoc intends to

use the data to publish papers, report to the San Juan County Marine Resources Committee and foster community awareness.

[Take me to the river...festival](#) - Sequim Gazette, October 1, 2014. Article on Dungeness River Festival with pictures of Clallam MRC's booth.

[Are there any sea stars left in the San Juans?](#) - Friday Harbor Labs Tide Bites, October 2014. Interesting article from Friday Harbor Labs on sea star wasting disease.

## Upcoming Events

**October 24, 2014 - Northwest Straits Commission Meeting.** WebEx Conference Call, 10:00 am -12:00 am. [Click here for more details.](#)

**October 25, 2014 - Sound Living.** Everett Community College, Everett, WA. Visit the Snohomish MRC booth at the Sound Living event in Everett -- a community day of learning about the connections between the water, land and people of Snohomish County and the surrounding area. [Click here to learn more.](#)

**November 20, 2014 - Focus on Farming Conference: "Back to the Farm."** Evergreen State Fairgrounds, Monroe, WA. A video highlighting the Snohomish MRC's Port Susan restoration project will be shown at this event. [Click here for registration.](#)

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Wishing everyone a Happy Thanksgiving!



## Mapping Our Progress - 16th Annual Conference




The 16<sup>th</sup> annual Marine Resources Committee conference is coming up in just a few weeks and will be held at the Northwest Maritime Center in Port Townsend. The whole Northwest Straits Initiative family – including MRC staff and members, Northwest Straits Commission and Foundation board members, project partners and sponsors will come together for two days, focused on the theme of **Mapping Our Progress**. Participants will learn about relevant marine issues from local, regional and national speakers. A full agenda is available on our [web site](#). The registration is closed, but many of the presentations and materials will be posted to our site following the event.

*Photo: Northwest Maritime Center in Port Townsend, credit: Caroline Gibson.*

## Restore America's Estuaries Conference

The Northwest Straits Initiative was well-represented at the [Restore America's Estuaries](#) (RAE) conference in

## November 2014

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### Upcoming Events



## Welcome New MRC Members and Staff!

This month we welcome new members and staff to the Marine Resources Committees in six counties, including Neil Harrington in Jefferson, Marc Broman in



Washington, DC earlier this month. Ginny Broadhurst, Commission director, presented on ***Wading Deeper into Citizen Engagement.*** Joan Drinkwin and Lisa Kaufman from the Northwest Straits

Foundation attended and presented, as well as several MRC members, who attended as part of their day jobs, including Christine Woodward of the Skagit MRC for the Samish Indian Nation, Keeley O'Connell of the Snohomish MRC for Earth Corps, and Eleanor Hines of the Whatcom MRC for Surfrider.

*Photo: Holly Faulstich and Christine Woodward promoting the NW Straits Commission at RAE.*

### **Pigeon Guillemot Data Presented to Regional Working Group**



Frances Wood, Chair of the Island MRC, recently presented information about pigeon guillemot studies on Whidbey Island to the region's technical working group on marine birds. The annual breeding survey conducted by the MRC has generated 10 years of data on this beautiful and iconic bird. The pigeon guillemot, marbled murrelet, and rhinoceros auklet are three species included in a recovery strategy coordinated by the Puget Sound



San Juan, and Jamey Selleck and Pete Haase in Skagit. New staff includes Deb Kucipeck in Clallam County and Anna Toledo in Island County. Thank you and welcome to these new members and staff - we look forward to working with you!

*Photo: Island MRC's new coordinator, Anna Toledo*

### **New to our Online Library**

Click below to view some recent work from the Commission and MRCs.

[Targeted Outreach to Prevent Negative Impacts from Shoreline Armoring](#)

[Olympia Oyster Fact Sheet](#)

[Skagit MRC Annual Report](#)

[Jefferson MRC Port Townsend Eelgrass Survey](#)

[Beach Cleanups in Clallam County](#)

[Snohomish MRC Derelict Fishing Gear Project](#)

Partnership. We are thrilled that the MRC's project, conducted in collaboration with Whidbey Audubon and other partners, is the basis for two new similar studies near Nisqually and Tacoma. Congratulations to Frances and the Island MRC for leading the way and filling an important gap in what we know about this essential species! To read more about the work in Island County, [click here to visit the MRC's web site](#).

*Photo: Pigeon guillemots (Cephus columba) gather on a rocky shoreline, credit: Celia Bartram*

### Opportunity to Join a Local MRC!



Do you live in Snohomish, Island or Whatcom County and have an interest in marine resource issues? If so, consider joining a Marine Resources Committee!

- Snohomish MRC is seeking 1-2 motivated members to serve as citizen advisors on a committee that addresses local marine issues and recommends action to the County Executive and County Council. Interested parties are expected to have a willingness to learn about marine conservation, participate in research founded on sound science, and contribute opinions on marine issues over a three-year term that runs 2015 - 2017. [Click here for an application](#).
- Island MRC is seeking up to five members representing a diverse array of stakeholders, including tribes, science, military, commercial and recreational marine users, ports, planners, engineers, agriculture, conservation groups, NGOs, education, and economic interests. Members of this voluntary, advisory committee serve a three-year term. Applicants should have interest and/or experience in marine resource issues. [Click here for details](#).
- Whatcom MRC is looking for an individual with relevant economic expertise (such as, but not limited to, a representative of the Port or commercial fishing) to fill an open position on the Committee and provide perspective on Whatcom County's marine resources for a four year term. [Read more on their web site](#).

### Northwest Straits in the News

**Searching for signs of success** – Skagit Valley Herald, October 19, 2014. Ecologist and Skagit MRC member, Jamey Selleck, monitors Anacortes waterfront for indicators that beach restoration project is working.

**Derelict net removal spares wildlife, protects rockfish** – Skagit Valley Herald, October 22, 2014. Article about the Northwest Straits Foundation's effort to remove derelict fishing nets in the Salish Sea.

**Saturday planting to cap Discovery Bay beach restoration** – Peninsula Daily News, November 6, 2014. Overview of a beach restoration project co-sponsored by the Jefferson MRC.

**Snohomish County Marine Resources Advisory Committee seeking members** – News of Mill Creek, November 11, 2014. Description of the Snohomish MRC and its current vacancies.

**Intro to rain gardens is Nov. 20** – Port Townsend Leader, November 12, 2014. Announcement for upcoming rain garden class sponsored by the Jefferson MRC.

**Puget Sound diver shares clean-water mission with Skagit committee** - Skagit Valley Herald, November 20, 2014. Underwater videographer Laura James shared her work with recently with the Skagit MRC.

## **In Other News...**

**Feds to protect Puget Sound habitat for rockfish** - Seattle Times, November 13, 2014

**1,000 Square Miles of Habitat Protected for Endangered Rockfish in Puget Sound** - Center for Biological Diversity, November 12, 2014

**Scientists Solve Mystery of West Coast Starfish Die-Off** - Earthfix, November 17, 2014

## **Upcoming Events**

**November 20, 2014: *Focus on Farming Conference*.** Evergreen State Fairgrounds, Monroe. The conference will feature keynote speakers, networking opportunities and 24 great workshop classes in six industry tracks. A video highlighting the Snohomish MRC's Port Susan restoration project will be shown at the event. [Click here for registration](#).

**November 20, 2014: *Catching the Rain: An Intro to Rain Gardens*.** WSU Extension Office, Port Townsend, 5:00 pm. Storm water from landscapes and roadways is the number one contributor of pollutants to Puget Sound. Bob Simmons, Water Resources Specialist with WSU Extension, will provide a 1-hour seminar to help you learn what rain gardens are and how they work. WSU Rain Garden Handbooks (the newest "how to" manual from WSU) will be available at the workshop. To register for the 1-hour program, call WSU Jefferson Extension at 360-379-5610 ext 200 or email [wsujeffersoncounty@gmail.com](mailto:wsujeffersoncounty@gmail.com).

**November 24 & 25, 2014: *Installing Rain Gardens*.** Sign up for a hands-on opportunity to help install a rain garden on Nov. 24 and/or Nov. 25. To register for the installation project, see contact info above. You do not need to attend the evening lecture to volunteer for the installation.

**December 3, 2014: *Bellingham Green Drinks*.** Brandywine Kitchen, Bellingham, 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm. Bellingham Green Drinks is an informal monthly gathering of environmentally-minded folks. Open to all, an ever-changing group of people meet to network, make friends, collaborate, and find out what's happening in their community. Join them for December Green Drinks co-hosted by [Whatcom County MRC](#) & [Northwest Straits Foundation](#) at [Brandywine Kitchen](#). Enjoy conversation and an opportunity to meet other local professionals in the sustainability community. [Click here for more details](#).

**December 5-6, 2014: *16th Annual MRC Conference*.** Northwest Maritime Center, Port Townsend. [See web site for details](#).

**January 22, 2014: *State of the Bay Research Symposium*.** Bellingham Cruise Terminal, Fairhaven. The Symposium will bring together researchers, managers, and interested citizens to broaden their understanding of the vital resource that is Bellingham Bay and explore opportunities to enhance communication/coordination in order to protect it for future generations. FREE but limited to first 150 people. [See web site](#) for more details and registration.

**January 30, 2014 - *Northwest Straits Commission Meeting*.** Island County - Location TBD, 10:00 am - 3:00 pm.

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## Happy Holidays

from the Northwest Straits Commission



**Northwest  
Straits**

**COMMISSION**

*partners in marine conservation*

### A Message from the Director



We are celebrating a productive year and feeling energized by our recent Marine Resources Committee conference! Over 140 people attended to hear about kelp, eelgrass, shellfish, sea level rise, oil and coal transport, pinto abalone, herring, tufted puffins, monitoring and mapping and a variety of MRC projects. It was an excellent conference and awesome to see so much good work happening.

In 2014, we developed a Northwest Straits Initiative strategic plan that will guide our work in the next three years. As we work towards Puget Sound recovery, we are making every effort to collaborate and work in step with all of our partners on a collective vision. We hope that you are part of this effort too.

Happy holidays and warm wishes for the coming year.

*Photo: Jeff Ward, Clallam MRC representative and Ginny Broadhurst, Director*

### MRC Conference Highlights

### December 2014



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### Bellingham Green Drinks

On December 3, [Whatcom MRC](#) hosted a Bellingham Green Drinks at Brandywine





The Northwest Straits Initiative held its 16th annual MRC conference, **Mapping Our Progress**, on December 5-6 in Port Townsend. With opening remarks provided by Jamestown S'Klallam Tribal Elder, Marlin Holden, the event brought together members of the seven MRCs, Northwest Straits Commission and Foundation members and staff, project partners, and generous event sponsors. Many thanks to the excellent speakers and presenters, and to the many participants who took time out of their busy schedules to join us.

[Visit our conference web page](#) to view the agenda, presentations, photos and more!

*Photo: Marlin Holden provides a welcoming address at the conference, credit: Al Bergstein (click on the photo to view more)*

### New Rain Gardens Filter Stormwater in Port Townsend



**Jefferson MRC** recently partnered with WSU Extension and the City of Port Townsend to install two new rain gardens on Garfield Street in uptown Port Townsend just in time to collect and filter stormwater runoff in the recent storms. Rooftops, driveways, streets and other impervious surfaces do not allow water to soak into the ground. These rain gardens will improve water

Kitchen, in partnership with the Northwest Straits Foundation. Approximately 90 people joined the lively and interesting discussions. Taylor Shellfish donated 25 pounds of Manila clams and Kulshan Brewery donated their Red Ale, both generous contributions that helped spark conversations. The MRC was able to share information about their work, raise their visibility in the community, and meet new people.



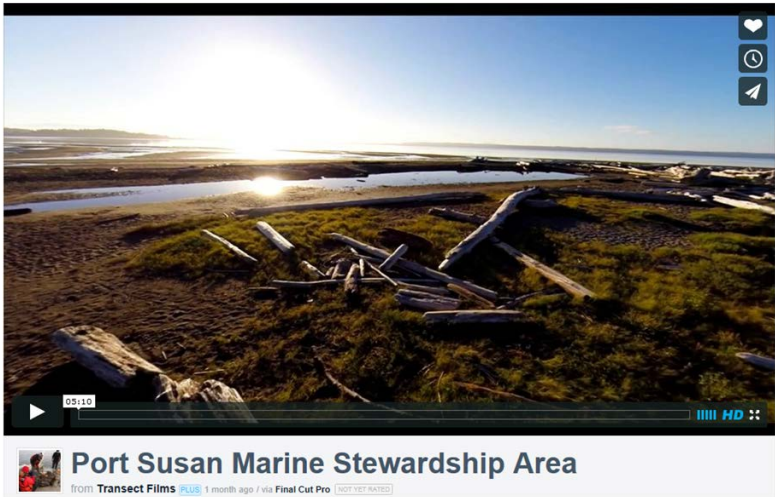
### Opportunity to Join the Clallam MRC

Clallam MRC is seeking interested applicants for up to three vacancies. Open positions include: representative of the marine trades, representative of Commissioner District III (West End), and an at-large position. Each position is a four-year term. [Visit their web site](#) to learn more and download an application.

quality by capturing stormwater pollutants from car oil, fertilizers, dog poop and sediments. Pollutants affect the health of eelgrass, shellfish, salmon and other marine species, so this project targets high-priority drainage areas where unfiltered stormwater flows directly into the Bay. MRC volunteers were joined by five members of the Sound Experience Adventuress crew, Beach Watchers, neighbors and other community volunteers for two days of planting and mulching in early December to make this project a success. [Click here for more information about rain gardens.](#)

*Photo: Bob Simmons, project leader for the rain gardens, is joined by WSU staff Darcy McNamara and volunteer Paul Rollinger, credit: Cheryl Lowe*

**Snohomish MRC Film Premiere at Focus on Farming Conference**



**Snohomish MRC** has been hitting the road with its new [video](#) about the Port Susan Marine Stewardship Area (MSA), with appearances at the Focus on Farming Conference and the MRC conference. This short video captures the beauty of the Port Susan area, and highlights the many ways it is valued and appreciated by those who live and work around it.

Earlier in 2014, the Snohomish County Council designated Port Susan as a voluntary marine stewardship area, an action that will help future conservation efforts. To learn more about the MSA, [click here](#). Since 2007, the MRCs in Snohomish and Island counties have worked with project partners to create a community-based marine stewardship plan for the area.

**A Tale of Marine Debris**



**Northwest Straits in the News**

[Volunteers document Fidalgo Bay surf smelt.](#) Skagit Valley Herald, November 22, 2014. Pete Haase, Skagit MRC member, is one of several volunteers who collects weekly samples for the DNR's intertidal forage fish spawning survey program at the local aquatic reserve.

[Marine issues are committee's focus.](#) Edmonds Beacon, November 25, 2014. Description of the Snohomish MRC and its current vacancies.

[Marine Resources Committees Annual Meeting in Port Townsend.](#) Olympic Peninsula Environmental News, December 6, 2014. Description of the 16th annual MRC Conference held at the Northwest Maritime Center in Port Townsend.

[Volunteers are sought for dozens of vacancies on Clallam boards.](#) Peninsula Daily News, December 12, 2014. Announcement includes the Clallam MRC vacancies and link to the application.





In November and December, our [Marine Debris Project](#) assistant, Paul Argites, and Washington Conservation Corps (WCC) veteran crews spent two weeks removing plastic, styrofoam, and creosote-treated wood from Northwest Straits shoreline. The cleanup effort resulted in the removal of **4.6 tons** of marine debris from Drayton Harbor, Padilla Bay, Bellingham Bay, and Whidbey Island's western shores. Recent high tide events and severe weather will keep the WCC cleanup crews busy over the coming months as they help control the influx of marine debris to Puget Sound shorelines.

*Photo: WCC crew member Alan Duell loading an ATV trailer with marine debris collected from Padilla Bay shoreline, credit: Paul Argites*



On a related note, our GIS specialist, Suzanne Shull, recently produced an interactive online ArcGIS Story Map highlighting the cleanup projects completed during this past summer. [ArcGIS Story Maps](#) use a cloud-based mapping program with text, pictures, and other multimedia to tell a story about the world. This Story Map was created for

the annual MRC conference as way to illustrate the collective impact of the Northwest Straits Marine Debris Project. [Click here to explore this web-](#)

[based story map.](#)

## In Other News

[Gifts from the sea: shellfish as an ecosystem service.](#) Encyclopedia of Puget Sound, December 11, 2014

[San Juan tops in state demolition 'turn-in' program; five dismantled in two days time.](#) The Journal of the San Juan Islands, December 11, 2014

[Sound Action - Forage Fish Matter video.](#) Vimeo, December 6, 2014

[Derelict Fishing Gear Removal.](#) Puget Sound: We Love You, December 14, 2014

[State report recommends better preparedness for oil-train accidents.](#) Crosscut, December 1, 2014. The Department of Ecology report delivered on December 1 calls for more people, equipment and a permanent funding source to cope with risks from increased transportation of oil by train. Dale Jensen, Spills program manager at Ecology, gave a presentation on this study at our MRC Conference.

## Upcoming Events

**January 17, 2015: *Starlight Beach Walk.*** Olympic Beach, Edmonds, 7:30-9:00pm. Co-sponsored by the Snohomish MRC, [click here for more details.](#)

**January 22, 2015: *State of the Bay Research Symposium.*** Bellingham Cruise Terminal, Fairhaven. The Symposium will bring together researchers, managers, and interested citizens to broaden their understanding of the vital resource that is Bellingham Bay and explore opportunities to enhance communication/coordination in order to protect it for future generations. FREE but limited to first 150 people. [See web site](#) for more details and registration.

**January 30, 2015: *Northwest Straits Commission Meeting.*** Pacific Rim Institute, Coupeville, 10:00 am - 3:00 pm.

**January - February, 2015: *Oil Spill Preparedness Workshops.*** MRCs and the Northwest Straits Foundation are coordinating to provide community workshops in Northwest Straits counties, with emphasis on topics of local interest. Locations to be announced.

- January 28, 2015 - Jefferson County
- February 5, 2015 - Clallam County
- February 18, 2015 - Whatcom County
- February 25, 2015 - Skagit County
- February 26, 2015 - Island County

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