



Northwest Straits Commission
Pacific Rim Institute – Multipurpose Room
180 Parker Road, Coupeville, WA 98239
January 30, 2015 10:00 am – 3:00 pm

Attendees

Commission Members: Christine Woodward (Skagit), Dale Moses (Jefferson), Jeff Ward (Clallam), Greg Ayers (San Juan), Ken Carrasco (Whatcom), Lincoln Loehr (Snohomish), Lenny Corin (Island), Jerry Masters, Nan McKay, Terry Williams, Marc Daily (Alternate)

Additional MRC Representation: Helen Price Johnson (Island), Shannon Davis (Jefferson), Cheryl Lowe (Jefferson), Ed Adams (Island), Maureen Goff (Jefferson)

Commission Staff: Ginny Broadhurst, Caroline Gibson, Sasha Horst, Holly Faulstich

Others in Attendance: Dan Tonnes (NOAA), Joan Drinkwin (NWS Foundation), Karen Anderson

Absent: Diana Bob, Sheida Sahandy, Terrie Klinger

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Christine opened the meeting with introductions.

Helen Price Johnson, Island County Commissioner and member of the Island MRC, welcomed the Commission to Coupeville and expressed her appreciation for their work and the efforts of the Island MRC. She encouraged the Commission to keep her and other legislative advocacy groups aware of important updates and actions being taken.

Approval of October Meeting Minutes

The minutes from the October 24, 2014 NW Straits Commission meeting were approved as written.

Director's Report

Ginny highlighted the Commission staff's activities and accomplishments in 2014, including the launch of a new web site, expansion of social media fan base, development of administrative resources, navigation of a new grant application system, and coordination/expansion of forage fish, kelp and ocean acidification projects and forums. The Commission hosted three MRC staff meetings in 2014 and formed a new external relations committee. She thanked Nan, Jeff and Ken for their invaluable help with the development and adoption of the 2014-2017 Strategic Plan. Ginny also thanked the Commission staff, specifically acknowledging Sasha's awesome work getting a new web site created and piloting the EAGL system for grants; Caroline's amazing work with the forage fish and kelp programs and launch of the Salish Sea International Kelp Alliance; and Holly's incredible abilities to learn our work so quickly and help out on so many fronts. The Commission staff acknowledged Ginny for being an exceptional leader, visionary and all-around fantastic boss.



NWSC Committee Reports

Executive Committee: Nan solicited input from the Commission on the idea of developing two annual review surveys. One would provide feedback on Ginny's performance as Executive Director and one would be a self-evaluation focused on how the Commission is doing as a whole (meeting facilitation, support, understanding roles, etc.). Nan offered to craft 3-5 questions and collect responses via Survey Monkey, to be discussed at a future Commission meeting. All were in favor.

Nan reported that the committee also discussed Commission-members' limited availability to step into leadership positions due to overlap with the Foundation board, term limits and other factors. A joint meeting of the Foundation and Commission executive committees is scheduled for February 23 to discuss and brainstorm solutions to this issue.

The Northwest Straits Initiative retreat is scheduled for March 12-13, beginning at noon on Thursday and ending at 4pm on Friday. A planning committee is in the process of developing the agenda. Participation is limited to the Foundation board, Commission, including each MRC representative or alternate, and necessary staff, to allow for in-depth group discussions.

External Relations Committee: Jerry reported that at their November and January meetings, the external relations committee reviewed the list of newly-elected county officials and discussed the best way to focus outreach efforts, share work plans and explain the goals of the Initiative. The committee will continue to encourage and support MRC members to work with local county officials and make sure that MRC work is known and understood. Ginny will also support relationship building and communication with elected officials to provide a regional perspective. The committee discussed the status of implementing the actions in the sustainability plan and ways to support MRC requests for local funding.

Marc commented that annual reports are an important tool for showing off an organization's work and how it relates to the strategic plan. They also provide a great opportunity to capture the attention of local elected officials and secure additional resources.

Strategic Planning Advisory Committee: Nan presented the final additions to the 2014-2017 strategic plan, which included new projects from Island, Whatcom, San Juan, Snohomish and Jefferson MRCs, as well as the operational goals of the Foundation. The Commission moved and approved by consensus to adopt the additions to the strategic plan as written. The Commission will be responsible for tracking implementation over time and will revisit the plan on a regular basis. Ginny asked the MRC representatives to help ensure that their MRC feels ownership of the plan and develops projects that are in line with the environmental goals.

Shannon suggested reinstating a past practice of using a Commission meeting to showcase one or two MRC projects. All were in favor.



Commission Business Items

2014 MRC Conference Debrief: Ginny reported that MRC conference feedback was overwhelmingly positive and she thanked everyone for their efforts and support. Overall, it was seen as a very inspiring and worthwhile event. Commission and Foundation staff will soon begin brainstorming for this year's conference and will be looking for input on topics, potential speakers, and overall format.

NWSC Work Plan and Budget: Sasha provided an overview of the Commission's FY2015 workplan and budget, which was officially approved back in June. The window of time available to spend out grants is shorter than in the past (only one year instead of two). Sasha is working with MRC staff to ensure they have a budget tracking system in place and are on course to spend out completely by Sept. 30. She encouraged MRCs to look to the future and develop multiple-year workplans.

Public Comment

Karen Anderson reported that large amounts of Styrofoam and creosote logs have been washing up on the north end of Mutiny Bay during high tides.

Ginny noted a letter that the Commission received from Joe Gaydos at SeaDoc Society, seeking support from the Commission and MRCs for the listing of the Tufted Puffin as a state endangered species (letter provided in meeting materials).

Joan reported that the Foundation has been working closely with MRCs to coordinate oil spill preparedness workshops designed for elected officials and resource managers. The first one was held in Jefferson County on January 28. Additional workshops will begin this spring to educate landowners on shoreline processes and options for managing erosion on their property. The Foundation has initiated an MRC liaison program, in which a staff member is assigned to each MRC and will familiarize themselves with projects, grants, and events to build relationships and provide support. Joan mentioned ways in which the Foundation and Commission are collaborating and suggested that MRCs invite new Foundation board members to attend their meetings.

Marc provided an update on EPA's analysis of the current funding model for the National Estuary Program. The current structure includes four lead organizations through state agency partnerships for marine and nearshore, watersheds, toxics, and nutrients. EPA received many comments from tribes, state agencies, local integrating organizations and others to reassess the funding process and decided to extend the timeframe for this analysis. They will likely reach a decision by the end of February.

The watershed report commissioned by Puget Sound Partnership provided recommendations to the legislation on December 1, but at this point, no legislators are carrying those recommendations forward. The legislative session is just starting to ramp up and updates are available every Friday. [Click here to sign up for Puget Sound Partnership legislative updates.](#)

Commission Business Items (cont'd)

Timeline for 2015-16 MRC Grants: Sasha reviewed the 2015-16 MRC grant timeline and suggested that MRCs add this topic to their next meeting agenda. The request for proposals will be issued on March 16



for a one-year grant period. It was suggested that the MRCs each present one proposed project at the May Commission meeting. The grant timeline was accepted as written with the addition of MRC presentations on May 29.

Caroline reported that the Science Advisory Committee has been reconvened and will help provide technical review of proposed MRC projects. The committee includes Ron Thom (chair), Tom Mumford (Marine Agronomics), Milton Love (UC Santa Barbara), Tessa Francis (Puget Sound Institute) and Caroline Gibson as staff lead.

Legislative Updates: Ginny reported that she provided written comment on behalf of the Commission in support of [Senate Bill 5166](#), a forage fish research and monitoring bill. Puget Sound Partnership testified in support of the bill as well.

MRC Summit in Olympia: Christine announced that an MRC summit in Olympia is in the works for the end of February to convene legislators, representatives of the Northwest Straits Initiative and the four coastal MRCs in an effort to increase coordination and work to identify common priorities

MRC Reports

Snohomish: Lincoln reported that members and staff interviewed several candidates for 2-3 positions on the MRC and will make a decision soon. The MRC's Port Susan MSA video was shown to over 500 attendees at the Focus on Farming Conference in November and the Edmonds Starlight Beach Walk was attended by close to 100 community members, despite inclement weather. Lincoln and others spotted about 200 sea stars, none of which appeared to be diseased. He encouraged the group to attend Sound Waters on February 7, where the MRC will display their booth.

Whatcom: Ken announced that Rachel Benbrook was recently elected as chair of the Whatcom MRC and Pete Granger has been recommended for appointment to the Economic Interest position on the MRC. Bellingham Bay State of the Bay Research Symposium, co-hosted by the MRC, brought together over 200 researchers, managers, tribes, elected officials, and interested citizens for a full-day event. One challenge currently facing the MRC is identifying members to champion projects and take the lead.

San Juan: Greg announced that Barbara Rosenkotter is leaving her position as the Lead Entity for Salmon Recovery. No replacement has been announced. The MRC held their annual retreat in December, where they drafted a report to city council and developed their 2015 workplan. They are in the planning phase for the marine managers' workshop in March, which will be followed by an oil spill preparedness and response workshop on March 28.

Jefferson: Dale reported that the MRC formed an Education Committee to develop an outreach/education plan and work on external relations in the community. The MRC hosted a highly successful oil spill response workshop on January 28. Cheryl and Maureen will give a presentation on SoundIQ at the February 5 Chumsortium meeting to local partner organizations. The Port of Port Townsend has requested assistance with a rain garden installation at the Point Hudson facility.

Island: Lenny reported that four long-time members termed out and three new members joined. Ken Urstad will continue on as a volunteer, particularly with eelgrass surveying. Helen Price Johnson will



once again be serving as an ex-officio member to the MRC. A new set of by-laws for the MRC were approved at their December meeting. An oil spill preparedness workshop is scheduled for February 26.

Clallam: Jeff reported that four prospective members/volunteers attended the January MRC meeting and Holly gave a presentation on the work of the Commission. The planning committee met to discuss the 2015 internship program and process for selecting students. Interns will be selected in March for projects relating to oil spill response, marine debris, Olympia oysters and education/outreach and will have designed MRC member mentors.

Skagit: Christine reported that Jay Lind was elected as the new chair of the MRC and new member, Jamey Selleck, was elected as co-chair. Nate Biletnikoff, Shell Puget Sound Refinery Environmental Team Lead, has been recommended for appointment to the MRC. A \$15,000 grant for education and outreach work at Bowman Bay was recently awarded to the MRC. An oil spill response workshop is scheduled for February 25 in Skagit County.

Invited Speaker

Update on Rockfish Recovery Plan

Dan Tonnes, marine biologist with NOAA Fisheries, provided an update on rockfish recovery planning for three ESA-listed species in Puget Sound: Yelloweye Rockfish, Canary Rockfish and Bocaccio. Dan complemented the Commission for the work they do and asked for assistance in getting recognition of the rockfish recovery plan. See separate attachment for Dan's slides.

[Click here](#) for a link to the Rockfish Conservation Area report by the David Suzuki Foundation and see the [rockfish page](#) on the NOAA web site for more information.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:15 pm.

The next Commission meeting will be a WebEx conference call on February 27 from 10:00am-12:00pm.



January 30, 2015 -- Meeting Highlights

NWSI Retreat

The Northwest Straits Initiative retreat is scheduled for March 12-13, beginning at noon on Thursday and ending at 4pm on Friday. A planning committee is in the process of developing the agenda.

- Participants will include **one** attendee from each county (either MRC rep or alternate), along with Foundation Board, Commissioners and a few staff members.

External Relations Committee – Outreach/Education

The External Relations Committee's goal for 2015 is to ensure that every county commissioner or councilmember in the Northwest Straits area has the opportunity to hear about the work of their MRC and understand its relationship to the Northwest Straits Initiative.

- NWSC staff and the Committee will be working with MRCs to communicate projects to local elected officials and Ginny will support relationship building and communication with electeds to provide a regional perspective.

MRC Grant and Budget Update

The MRC grant timeline for 2015-16 was approved. The request for proposals will be issued on March 16 for a one-year grant period. MRCs are one-quarter of the way through their current grant cycle should be tracking whether they are on track to complete their workplans and spending by September 30.

- Potential projects for the next grant cycle should be added as a topic to your next MRC meeting
- The Commission has formed a new Science Advisory Committee that will help with the technical review of proposed MRC projects. The committee includes Ron Thom (chair), Tom Mumford (Marine Agronomics), Milton Love (UC Santa Barbara) and Tessa Francis (Puget Sound Institute).
- MRCs will be asked to present their project proposals at the May 29 Commission meeting, two days prior to the application deadline.
- Sasha is working with MRC staff to ensure they have a budget tracking system in place and are on course to spend out completely by Sept. 30.

Strategic Plan - Additions Adopted

Additions to the Northwest Straits Initiative Strategic Plan were adopted by the Commission. New project additions were added from Island, Whatcom, San Juan, Snohomish and Jefferson MRCs.

- MRCs are encouraged to review the plan on a regular basis and develop future projects that will help us make progress towards the four environmental goals.

Upcoming Events – See website for more details

February 5, 2015 – *Whatcom Public Speaker Series: Doug Huddle, WDFW* – Civic Annex Bldg, Bellingham

February 5, 2015 – *Oil Spill Preparedness & Response Workshop* – Port Angeles City Council Chambers

February 7, 2015 – *Sound Waters* – South Whidbey High School, Langley

February 27, 2015 – *Northwest Straits Commission Meeting* – WebEx conference call



Northwest Straits Commission
February 27, 2015 10:00 am – 12:15 pm
WebEx Conference Call

Attendees

Commission Members: Nan McKay, Dale Moses (Jefferson), Jeff Ward (Clallam), Tom Temple (San Juan Alternate), Ken Carrasco (Whatcom), Lincoln Loehr (Snohomish), Lenny Corin (Island), Jerry Masters, Cecilia Gobin (Alternate), Terrie Klinger

Additional MRC Representation: Kathleen Herrmann (Snohomish)

Commission Staff: Ginny Broadhurst, Caroline Gibson, Sasha Horst, Holly Faulstich

Others in Attendance: Joan Drinkwin (NWS Foundation), Ron Thom (Alternate), Terry Stevens (Padilla Bay Reserve), Suzanna Stoike (PSP)

Absent: Christine Woodward, Sheida Sahandy, Terry Williams, Greg Ayers

Welcome and Introductions

Nan opened the meeting with introductions, in Christine's absence.

Approval of January Meeting Minutes

The minutes from the January 30, 2015 NW Straits Commission meeting were approved as written.

MRC Reports

Clallam: Jeff reported that the MRC's February 5 oil spill response and preparedness forum was well-attended and garnered positive feedback. A HAZWOPER class and two oiled wildlife rescue trainings will be held in March and April. MRC members are gearing up for the 2015 internship project; letters of interest for the four intern positions are due February 28. Mike Doherty will be applying to join the MRC.

Snohomish: Lincoln reported that the MRC displayed their booth at Sound Waters in February. A [recent article](#) in the Everett Herald highlighted seabird populations in the Port Susan MSA and quoted Kathleen Herrmann. Kathleen is looking for more ways to publicize their Port Susan film and Valley Supply may be interested in sponsoring the video as a movie theater advertisement. Alyson Rae's position will likely get extended for another six months until someone is hired to replace her.

Whatcom: Ken reported that Doug Huddle's talk on historic salmonid abundances was attended by over 30 people from the community and provided positive exposure for the MRC. Whatcom Water Weeks is scheduled for September 12-26 and MRC staff have begun the planning process in coordination with WWIN. The North Chuckanut Bay clam survey is being coordinated by two MRC members and will take place April 21 with Wade King Elementary students.



San Juan: Tom announced that the MRC is in the midst of planning for a Marine Managers Workshop with an emphasis on vessel traffic risk assessment, scheduled for March 26-27. Barbara Bentley presented the MRC's 2014 annual report and 2015 workplan to the County Council on February 9. Tom and Barbara plan to attend the County Council meeting in March, during which revisions to the Shoreline Management Plan will be discussed.

Jefferson: Dale provided some details about a Port of Port Townsend water treatment project that involves using biochar to remove zinc from wastewater. The MRC's oil spill preparedness workshop on January 28 was highly informative and reached the target audience. The eelgrass protection project is back on track and the MRC expects to expand the no anchor zone by installing additional buoys in late August. Three open positions on the MRC are currently being advertized.

Island: Lenny reported that three new members to the Island MRC received an orientation and are eager to dive right in. The MRC has been involved in discussions surrounding net pens and has agreed to assemble an advisory document for the Island County Department of Natural Resources regarding the net pen prohibition in the SMP. At the Sound Waters event, Ken Urstad was named Coastal Volunteer of the Year. Ken served the MRC for nine years and will continue on as a volunteer.

Skagit: The Skagit MRC was not represented at the meeting. See written report for updates.

NWSC Committee Reports

Executive Committee: Nan reported that the executive committee met in February and talked through the Northwest Straits Commission meeting agenda and goals for the upcoming joint Foundation/Commission executive committee meeting. She mentioned that Ginny provided a brief funding update at the meeting and the group discussed issues associated with the timing of MRC projects and ways to improve the whole funding process.

Joint Executive Committee: Jeff highlighted the main discussion items from the joint executive committee meeting, including acceptable crossover between the Foundation and Commission boards, separation of leadership, and involvement in sustainability planning. There was general agreement that some level of overlap (excluding leadership positions) would be beneficial for communication and that there should be clear expectations of duties and a concerted effort to bring new people into the process. Dale recommended researching this issue from a legal standpoint and whether or not the two organizations should be completely separate. Nan added that the committees discussed ways to effectively sustain long-term growth of the Initiative.

Commission Business Items

Creation of nomination committee: Ginny reminded the group that officer elections are fast approaching and a nominating committee is needed. Jerry mentioned that the job entails making phone calls to Commission members to gauge interest and availability in leadership positions. The nominating committee will present a slate of candidates at the April Commission meeting and a vote will occur in May. As outgoing chair, Christine will serve on the committee and Jerry volunteered to join her.



Annual retreat agenda and preparation: Caroline reviewed the agenda and homework assignment for the upcoming Northwest Straits Initiative annual retreat. The planning committee altered the agenda slightly and a finalized version will be sent out early next week. Joan reminded board members and MRC representatives to read the strategic plan thoroughly and think about ways to collaborate and achieve the environmental goals. Contact Holly for any questions regarding meals or lodging.

Debrief on MRC forum in Olympia: Ginny reported that the MRC forum in Olympia was a successful event. Ten representatives from four MRCs attended, as well as members of the four coastal MRCs, Commission and Foundation staff, The Nature Conservancy, Surfrider and several legislators. It was a positive first step toward speaking with a collective voice for coastal marine resources.

RFP and NW Straits Strategic Plan: Ginny reminded MRC representatives to think about and use the strategic plan as their MRC develops a project list for the coming year. Request for proposals will be issued on March 16.

Training for MRC chairs: Ginny mentioned that training for MRC chairs was raised in Executive Committee a few months back. Two new MRC chairs were elected recently and Ginny provided them with resources, handouts, and useful information about how to be an effective chair. A more formal in-person training could be developed as part of the fall conference if there is interest.

Legislative updates: Puget Sound Day, sponsored by Representatives Heck and Kilmer, is scheduled for March 25 in Washington DC and Ginny will attend. Forage fish bills SB 5166 and HB 1152 have made it through their respective committees, but stripped of certain provisions that make them incompatible. Ginny encouraged those interested to track the bills. Suzanna Stoike added that the Puget Sound Partnership has a [link to legislative updates](#) on their website and they host a weekly call that anyone is welcome to join.

Dates and location for fall MRC conference: Sasha will send out a Survey Monkey to Commission and Foundation boards next week outlining the options for MRC conference locations and dates. The list of places that meet the criteria (within walking distance of a hotel, government rates available, adequate capacity, affordable) is short, but staff are open to new ideas and anyone is welcome to send his or her suggestions.

Public Comment

None.

Roundtable

Jeff reported that the Foundation board is resuming their search for an executive director and is exploring the use of a placement firm to help with advertisement and initial selections.

Cecilia Gobin, alternate for Terry Williams, introduced herself to the Commission. She is the Puget Sound Policy Analyst for the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission and is looking forward to increasing tribal participation and engagement in Northwest Straits projects and issues. The Commission welcomed Cecilia.



Invited Speaker

Protecting Puget Sound: A Look at Using Rain Gardens

Bob Simmons, Olympic Region Water Resources Specialist for WSU Extension, provided an overview of how rain gardens function, the benefits of installing one and updates on some recent projects in Jefferson County. More information on rain gardens can be found at: <http://raingarden.wsu.edu/>

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 12:20 pm.

The next meeting will be the annual retreat on March 12-13 at Padilla Bay Reserve.



February 27, 2015 -- Meeting Highlights

NWSI Retreat

The Northwest Straits Initiative annual retreat is scheduled for **March 12-13**, beginning at 11:30am on Thursday and ending at 3:30pm on Friday. A draft agenda has been circulated by the planning committee.

- Retreat participants will include one attendee from each county (MRC rep or alternate), along with Foundation Board, Commissioners and staff members.
- Prior to the retreat, participants are asked to read the strategic plan and brainstorm ways they can contribute to the success of the Initiative or the accomplishment of environmental goals.
- There are additional tasks in the homework assignment for MRC representatives to complete (see attached document).

MRC Grant RFP

The Commission's request for proposals from MRCs will be issued on March 16.

- Potential projects for the next grant cycle should be under discussion.
- Think about and use the NWSI Strategic Plan as you develop projects for the coming year.
- MRCs will present their project proposals at the May 29 Commission meeting, two days prior to the application deadline.
- MRCs should be tracking whether they are on course to complete their current workplans and spend out completely by September 30.

Training for MRC Chairs

The Executive Committee raised the idea of providing training for MRC chairs. Two new chairs were elected recently and Ginny provided them with resources, handouts, and useful information about how to be an effective chair.

- A formal, in-person training could be developed as part of the MRC conference this fall if participants are interested.

2015 MRC Conference

Commission and Foundation staff have begun brainstorming venues and dates for the 2015 MRC Conference. Once the options have been narrowed down, a survey will be sent to Commission and Foundation boards for their input.

- The list of places that meet the criteria (within walking distance of a hotel, government rates available, adequate capacity, affordable) is short, but staff are open to new ideas and anyone is welcome to send his or her suggestions.

Upcoming Events – See website for more details

March 5 – April 30, 2015 – *Salish Sea Stewards Volunteer Training* – Padilla Bay Reserve
March 7 – April 18, 2015 – *Shoreline Landowner Workshops* – Throughout NW Straits counties
March 12-13, 2015 – *Northwest Straits Initiative Annual Retreat* – Padilla Bay Reserve
March 21, 2015 – *Oil Spill HAZWOPER Training* – Port Angeles City Council Chambers
March 26-27, 2015 – *Marine Managers' Workshop* – San Juan Island Grange Hall
March 28 & April 11, 2015 – *Oiled Wildlife Trainings* – Clallam County Fairgrounds
April 24, 2015 – *Northwest Straits Commission Meeting* – WebEx conference call



Northwest Straits Initiative Retreat

March 12 – 13, 2015

Padilla Bay Reserve

Homework Assignment:

- **All participants:** Read the strategic plan and the retreat agenda. Think carefully about what and how you can contribute - to the retreat, and to the success of the Initiative. This includes personal connections and skills! Write this down and bring with you.
- **Commission and Foundation staff:** Prepare to articulate what you plan to do in FY2016, and who is doing what now with regard to each environmental goal in the strategic plan.
- **Each MRC representative** come prepared to highlight:
 - 1) A signature project or activity that supports each of the 4 environmental goals in the Initiative's strategic plan.
 - 2) A short-list of messages to carry forward from the MRC to the retreat (for example: something the MRC would like to do; a specific challenge that prevents the MRC from getting where it wants to go; or perhaps something that's emerging and that the MRC feels it needs to be a part of).



Northwest Straits Commission
April 24, 2015 10:00 am – 12:00 pm
WebEx Conference Call

Attendees

Commission Members: Christine Woodward (Chair, Skagit), Dale Moses (Jefferson), Jeff Ward (Clallam), Greg Ayers (San Juan), Chris Brown (Whatcom Alt.), Tom Hoban (Snohomish Alt.), Ed Adams (Island Alt.), Jerry Masters, Terrie Klinger, Nan McKay, Marc Daily (Alternate)

Additional MRC Representation: Austin Rose (Whatcom), Phil Green (San Juan), Rachel Benbrook (Whatcom), Taylor McDowell (Snohomish), Jay Lind (Skagit), Shannon Davis (Jefferson), Tom Temple (San Juan), Anna Toledo (Island)

Commission Staff: Ginny Broadhurst, Caroline Gibson, Sasha Horst, Holly Faulstich

Others in Attendance: Lisa Kaufman (NWS Foundation), Terry Stevens (Padilla Bay Reserve), Suzanna Stoike (PSP)

Absent: Sheida Sahandy, Terry Williams, Lenny Corin, Lincoln Loehr, Ken Carrasco

Welcome and Introductions

Christine opened the meeting with introductions.

Approval of February Meeting Minutes

The minutes from the February 27, 2015 Northwest Straits Commission meeting were approved as written.

NWSC Committee Reports

Executive Committee: The Executive Committee met twice since the last Commission meeting. Nan reported that at their March meeting, the committee debriefed on the annual retreat and discussed next steps. Dale inquired about the process going forward with regards to updating the strategic plan with new actions. Commission staff will review notes from the retreat and decide how best to proceed. At their April meeting, they welcomed Ron Thom to the committee (chair of the new Science Advisory Committee). Nan expressed a desire to plan out a year's worth of Commission meetings, which would include identifying presentation topics and scheduled tasks/events such as budget approval, work plan review, annual retreats and conferences. Topics of interest for future meetings should be sent to Nan and Ginny. Jeff noted it would be helpful for the Commission and Foundation to create and share forward-looking agendas with one another. The EC also discussed the status of strategic plan implementation. Ginny noted that Commission staff have been attending MRC meetings to support project proposal discussions and have communicated the importance of referencing the strategic plan in the process.



External Relations Committee: Jerry explained that the committee met at the end of March and discussed the existing sustainability plan. They agreed the overall direction of the plan is correct – diversified funding continues to be essential – but they recommended updating the plan with current information on the role of funding from local, state and federal sources in supporting the work of the Initiative. The committee suggested that local governments might be more receptive if the request was for just 10% as a point of entry, and a goal of at least \$20K could be phased in. Ginny mentioned that the MRC staff met recently and she reminded the group that the Commission can help support them in their local funding requests. The committee will update the sustainability plan and present it for approval at the May meeting. On the federal side, Ginny met with staff from Senators Cantwell and Murray’s offices and discussed the need to pass reauthorization language. She also discussed collaborative legislative outreach opportunities with Jeff Parsons, Legislative Affairs Director at Puget Sound Partnership. A proposal for \$200k was recently submitted to NOAA, and if granted, would help pay for staff salary and continuing work on ocean acidification outreach and local forums.

Nomination Committee: Jerry reported that the nominating committee is still accepting nominations for chair/vice chair and will present a full slate of candidates for election at the May Commission meeting.

Science Advisory Committee: Caroline reported that the new Science Advisory Committee met for the first time on April 17. Their primary duties will be to provide scientific input, guidance and technical review for MRC projects. Marc noted that Ron Thom was recently hired part time to provide advice and scientific leadership to Puget Sound Partnership (PSP) as well, which will provide additional opportunities for collaboration between the Commission and PSP.

Commission Business Items

Puget Sound Day on the Hill: Ginny provided an overview of Puget Sound Day on the Hill, which she attended on March 25 in Washington DC. The event was organized by Representatives Kilmer and Heck in coordination with the Puget Sound Partnership and Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission. Roughly 25 participants (including Marc and Sheida) met with legislative staff and elected officials with delegations from the Puget Sound region and beyond. The intent was to raise awareness and improve understanding of the size, complexity and needs Puget Sound recovery efforts. It was a successful effort and is expected to become an annual event.

MRC Conference: Ginny reported that the fall MRC conference will be held November 6-7 at the Lakeway Inn in Bellingham. Save the date cards will be distributed soon, along with a survey on session topics and feedback.

MRC grant RFP and timeline: MRC project proposals are underway for the 2016 RFP and Commission staff are available to help support that process as needed. Ginny reminded MRC representatives to refer to the strategic plan goals when developing new projects.

May meeting/MRC project presentations: Ginny presented a draft agenda for the May 29 Commission meeting and reminded MRC representatives to let Holly know who will be presenting by May 1. The final FY15 project proposals are due May 31. Ginny also announced that Commission staff are reviewing the dates and locations for 2015-16 Commission meetings; a revised calendar will be distributed soon.



MRC Reports

Jefferson: Dale reported that the MRC co-sponsored a forage fish survey training for 19 volunteers at Fort Townsend State Park for their upcoming shoreline restoration project. Interpretive signs are being drafted for this project and rain gardens in Port Townsend. The MRC is continuing to advertise vacant positions, but have no candidates lined up. Dale also mentioned an article he read about an [XPRIZE for creating ocean pH sensor technology](#).

Clallam: Jeff announced that the Clallam MRC hosted an 8-hr HAZWOPER training on March 21, attended by 45 people, and a two-day oiled wildlife training that was filled to capacity. The MRC is in the midst of discussing project proposals and one idea is to use past MRC projects and data to update the geographic response plan for the region. Rep. Derek Kilmer will be attending an MRC-sponsored coastal cleanup on Saturday.

Whatcom: Chris Brown reported that the MRC co-sponsored a presentation at Village Books by Joe Gaydos and Audrey Benedict on their new book and they packed the house! On April 21-22, the MRC co-hosted a clam survey at North Chuckanut Bay with third grade students and it was a considered a great success by all involved. At their April meeting, the MRC discussed 2015-16 projects, including kelp/eelgrass monitoring, plankton monitoring and mussel watch.

Snohomish: Tom Hoban announced that three new Snohomish MRC members were approved by County Council. Alyson Rae completed her term with WCC and Taylor McDowell replaced her as MRC Program Assistant. The recreational crabber subcommittee is moving forward with a photo contest. The MRC has participated in two public meetings regarding the Meadowdale Feasibility Study.

Skagit: Jay Lind announced that twenty-five Salish Sea Stewards will graduate on April 30 after 40 hours of classroom and field training. Fidalgo Bay Day is scheduled for August 29 at the Fidalgo Bay Resort. Paul Dinnel has been actively involved in pinto abalone outplanting at six locations near Burrows, Allan and Cypress Islands. Volunteer beach seining training occurred in February with 51 people in attendance including five MRC members.

Island: Ed Adams reported that John Carr replaced Bill Larsen as the representative from the Port of Coupeville. The MRC submitted an advisory document to the Island County DNR regarding the net pen prohibition in the Shoreline Management Plan. The Commission and WDFW hosted a forage fish survey training in Coupeville on April 21 and pigeon guillemot monitoring training is scheduled for May 27.

San Juan: Greg reported that the MRC hosted a successful Marine Managers' Workshop on March 26-27, focused on vessel traffic risks to the Gulf and San Juan Islands. Over 50 people attended, including a contingent of Canadian speakers and participants. Proposal for 2015-16 projects is in the works and will be further discussed at May meeting. Multiple positions on the MRC are soon to be vacant.



Invited Speaker

Action Agenda & EPA Funding Update

Marc Daily, Deputy Director of the Puget Sound Partnership, presented an overview of the newly-revised EPA funding model and process for updating the 2016 Action Agenda. Under this new funding model, there will be three lead organizations based on the strategic initiatives of the Action Agenda (AA): Habitat, Shellfish and Stormwater (the previous model had four lead organizations that were hosted by state agencies). These leads will be responsible for convening Strategic Initiative (SI) Teams comprised of technical experts, program managers, and policy specialists. Team members will also be recruited from tribes, Local Integrating Organizations (LIO), academia and NGOs to provide a variety of perspectives. SI Teams are responsible for formulating recommendations on AA priorities and soliciting, reviewing and recommending near-term actions for AA updates.

What MRCs need to know: \$250k will be going to each [Local Integrating Organization](#) (LIO) to implement their two year action plan. Marc emphasized the importance of MRCs engaging with their LIOs to make sure their work is considered and represented in the local two year plans. Those plans will have much greater emphasis in the Action Agenda going forward. Contact Marc if the process isn't working.

Roundtable

There was some confusion about the details of the funding scenario. Commission staff will schedule a follow up call for specific questions and issues. If possible, MRCs should invite their local LIO coordinator to present at an MRC meeting. Suzanna Stoike, Ecosystem Recovery Coordinator, offered to be a resource as well.

[Call for sessions is now open](#) for the 2016 Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference – deadline June 30, 2015. Conference will be held in Vancouver, British Columbia, April 13-15, 2016.

Public Comment

None.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 12:05 pm. The next meeting will be on May 29, 2015 at the Padilla Bay Reserve.



April 24, 2015 – Commission Meeting Highlights

Meeting Topics for Coming Year

Commission staff are developing content for 2015-16 Commission meetings, including presentation topics and scheduled tasks/events.

- Topics of interest for discussion or presentation at future meetings (e.g. net pens, vessel traffic, etc.) should be sent to Nan and Ginny.

MRC Grant RFP & Project Presentations

MRC project proposals are due May 31 for FY15. Commission staff are available to help support that process as needed.

- Potential projects for the next grant cycle should be under discussion. Remember to refer to the NWSI Strategic Plan goals as you develop projects for the coming year.
- MRCs will present a project at the May 29 Commission meeting. Let Holly know by May 1 who will be presenting and the title of the project.
- MRCs should be tracking whether they are on course to complete their current workplans and spend out completely by September 30.

Action Agenda and EPA Funding Update

Marc Daily, Deputy Director of the Puget Sound Partnership, presented an overview of the newly-revised EPA funding model and process for updating the 2016 Action Agenda.

- \$250k will be going to each [Local Integrating Organization](#) (LIO) to implement their two year action plan.
- It is important for MRCs to continue to engage with their LIOs and make sure their work is represented in the local two year plans. Those plans will have much greater emphasis in the Action Agenda going forward.
- If possible, MRCs should invite their local LIO coordinator to present at an upcoming MRC meeting.

2015 MRC Conference

Save the date! The 2015 MRC Conference will be held November 6-7 at the Lakeway Inn in Bellingham. Save the date cards will be distributed soon, along with a survey on session topics and feedback.

Upcoming Events – See website for more details

May 5, 2015 – *Community Forum on Ocean Health* – South Whidbey High School
May 7, 2015 – *Forage Fish Survey Training* – Fidalgo Bay Resort
May 7, 2015 – *Beach Naturalist Refresher Training* – Skagit County
May 20, 2015 – *Fort Townsend Beach Monitoring Training* – Port Townsend
May 22, 2015 – *Diggin' for Dinner* – Port Townsend
May 27, 2015 – *Pigeon Guillemot Monitoring Training* – Island County
May 29, 2015 – *Northwest Straits Commission Meeting* – Padilla Bay Reserve
May 30 & June 13, 2015 – *Oiled Wildlife Training* – Clallam County Fairgrounds
June 4 & 18, 2015 – *Presentation Skills Training* – Padilla Bay Reserve
June 7, 2015 – *Blaine Water Fest* – Blaine Port



Northwest Straits Commission
May 29, 2015 • 9:00 am – 3:00 pm
Padilla Bay Reserve

Attendees

Commission Members: Christine Woodward (Chair, Skagit), Dale Moses (Jefferson), Jeff Ward (Clallam), Phil Green (San Juan), Ken Carrasco (Whatcom), Lincoln Loehr (Snohomish), Lenny Corin (Island), Nan McKay (Vice Chair), Jerry Masters, Sheida Sahandy

Additional MRC Representation: Austin Rose (Whatcom), Taylor McDowell (Snohomish), Jay Lind (Skagit), Tom Temple (San Juan), Anna Toledo (Island), Ed Adams (Island), Sarah Brown (Snohomish), Lyn Muench (Clallam), Marta Branch (San Juan), Jamey Selleck (Skagit), Tom Hoban (Snohomish), Cheryl Lowe (Jefferson), Bob Hillmann (Snohomish), Tori Cantelow (Clallam), Traci Sanderson (Snohomish)

Commission Staff: Ginny Broadhurst, Caroline Gibson, Sasha Horst, Holly Faulstich

Others in Attendance: Joan Drinkwin (NWS Foundation), Jason Morgan (NWS Foundation), Lisa Kaufman (NWS Foundation), Catherine Buchalski (Padilla Bay Reserve)

Absent: Terry Williams, Terrie Klinger, Ron Thom

Welcome and Introductions

Christine opened the meeting with introductions.

Approval of April Meeting Minutes

The minutes from the April 24, 2015 Northwest Straits Commission meeting were approved as written.

MRC Presentations

1) Snohomish MRC: Long Term Nearshore Beach Restoration Maintenance and Management Study (Sarah Brown)

- a. In the fall of 2015, the Snohomish MRC will complete a nearshore beach restoration project on the shoreline between Everett and Mukilteo that involves removing riprap, adding dredge material and planting vegetation. Their new project for FY16 will be maintenance and management of the restored beaches. Goals of the project include: determine funding requirements for maintenance, increase public awareness of restoration effort and work with the community to improve beach access.
- b. Commission members asked questions and discussed issues of sea level rise, the use of dredged material and debris cleared from railroad tracks, effects on migrating salmon, ferry terminal relocation impacts and calculating the percent of shoreline restored.

2) Island MRC: Phytoremediation of Ebey's Landing Prairie (Ed Adams)

- a. The Island MRC plans to continue pursuing phytoremediation projects in 2015-16. Ed reported that the MRC will collaborate with Whidbey Island Conservation District to

develop cost estimates for maintaining the bioswale, monitor Ebey's Prairie drainage flow and water quality, and present 3-5 preliminary engineering designs that could improve water quality on the prairie. They will also explore funding opportunities for completing additional bioremediation projects and prepare a report on their findings.

- b. Commissioners commented that a report on the Coupeville bioswale could be useful to other communities on the island and may raise additional research questions. Ginny mentioned that phytoremediation is a strategy for mitigating ocean acidification and Ebey's Prairie is on her list of possible field trips for next year.

3) Jefferson MRC: Rain Gardens for Treating Stormwater (Cheryl Lowe)

- a. Cheryl reported that the Jefferson MRC will continue working on a project that began in 2013. Due to an outpouring of interest in rain gardens by Port Townsend residents, the MRC will conduct a county-wide assessment of the highest-priority locations suitable for bioremediation and will install 2-5 new rain gardens in FY16. The MRC will evaluate the effectiveness of the gardens using flow meters and will install interpretive signs at several locations.
- b. Commissioners suggested investigating the health of eelgrass in areas where stormwater has passed through rain gardens. They also asked about how the gardens will be maintained in the future. Sheida discussed the difficulty associated with rain garden permitting by regulatory agencies in certain settings, but that it has come a long way in the past few years.

4) Clallam MRC: Olympia Oyster Restoration in Washington Harbor (Jeff Ward & Tori Cantelow)

- a. The Clallam MRC proposed an expansion of their Olympia oyster restoration work for FY16, which would involve a feasibility study focused on the reintroduction of this species to Washington Harbor. They would evaluate sediment and water quality data to determine optimum locations for test plots, write a project-specific QAPP, plant oysters and monitor their success.
- b. Questions on this project concerned the JARPA permit process, landowner permissions and likelihood of harvests occurring on private property.

5) San Juan MRC: Marine Managers' Workshop (Marta Branch)

- a. Marta reported that the San Juan MRC will continue their tradition of hosting a Marine Managers' Workshop in 2016. The theme will focus on analysis and discussion of increased vessel traffic in the region and the potential responses from local marine managers. They hope to increase participation and collaboration with Canadians and tribes from the area.
- b. Christine recommended that Marta connect with the Coast Salish Gathering, as this group has been focused on the vessel traffic issues for several years. Nan asked about how workshop accomplishments are measured.

6) Whatcom MRC: North Chuckanut Bay Pollution Identification and Correction Project (Austin Rose)

- a. During FY16, the Whatcom MRC will continue monitoring fecal coliform concentrations in North Chuckanut Bay, work to identify sources of this pollutant and provide water quality data to the public and interested parties. They will work to increase community involvement in water quality sampling and evaluate the effectiveness of improvement projects as they are implemented in the Chuckanut Watershed.



- b. Commissioners suggested looking into a centralized sewage treatment system rather than individual on-site septic systems for Chuckanut Village and/or offer a free septic system self-inspection certification workshop for residents.

7) Skagit MRC: Pinto Abalone Restoration Project (Jamey Selleck)

- a. Jamey reported that the Skagit MRC plans to build upon existing outplant efforts of juvenile pinto abalone at multiple locations in Skagit County to achieve a sustainable population. In partnership with Puget Sound Restoration Fund, they will collect monitoring data at established outplanting sites and measure success of restoration work to guide next steps.
- b. Ginny suggested including an education and outreach component to this project as increasing public awareness by fishermen and others may help this project. Others recommended more clearly defining the MRC's role and how they will "own" the project.

Public Comment

Joan announced that the [Bellingham Herald featured an article](#) about the Foundation's derelict gear program on May 27.

Commission Business Items

Ginny provided an update on Commission staff activities, news and upcoming events:

- The 2014 Annual Report is now available in hard copy and [on the Commission's website](#).
- The July Commission meeting will be held in Snohomish County and will include a presentation by the Department of Ecology on net pens. Background materials on this topic will be provided for the June WebEx meeting.
- The [2015 MRC conference](#) will be held November 6-7 at the Lakeway Inn in Bellingham. Dr. Florian Graner will be the keynote speaker on Friday night. Save the date cards were provided to MRC representatives to distribute.
- Dr. Ron Thom was appointed to the Commission by the Governor on May 5. Ron is also serving as chair of the Science Advisory Committee. Cecilia Gobin with the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission was appointed as Terry Williams' alternate.
- Funding for the Marine Debris Program has ended and Paul Argites finished up his work with the Commission in mid-May.
- [Call for sessions is now open](#) for the 2016 Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference – deadline June 30, 2015. It will be held in Vancouver, British Columbia, April 13-15, 2016. Ginny is on the Conference Program Committee; contact her if interested in being involved.
- The next [Community Forum on Ocean Health](#) will be held June 11 at Fidalgo Bay Resort in Anacortes.

Election of Officers

Per the recommendation of the nominating committee, the Commission moved and approved by consensus the election of Nan McKay as chair for the upcoming year and Jerry Masters as interim vice chair until a volunteer steps up to replace him.



Ginny thanked Christine for her service to the Commission over the past two years and presented her with a salmon paddle in recognition for her work, carved by a Jamestown S'Klallam Tribal Member.

MRC Reports

Clallam: Jeff announced that Bob Campbell was elected chair and Ed Bowlby as vice chair of the MRC during their annual elections in May. Jeff will continue as the MRC representative. Five summer interns were selected and will begin their projects on June 15. The Clallam MRC has also hired a project coordinator who will begin on June 1.

Island: Lenny reported that Island County WSU Beach Watchers have decided to terminate their affiliation with WSU Extension. There is a committee working towards the establishment of an independent, non-profit organization by the end of 2015, but they will continue to work closely with the MRC. He also reported that the Ocean Health Forum in Langley was a great success and the MRC would love to host another in Oak Harbor or elsewhere.

Jefferson: Dale reported that the MRC is interested in collaborating more closely with the Strait of Juan de Fuca Ecosystem Recovery Network (Strait ERN) Lead Integrating Organization (LIO). The LIO coordinator, John Cambalik, will be presenting at the June MRC meeting on the new Puget Sound Partnership funding strategy. The MRC is preparing to expand the no-anchor zone in Port Townsend.

Whatcom: Ken reported that the Whatcom MRC formed a new policy subcommittee to provide advice to the County Council on Comprehensive Plan Updates and the Critical Area Ordinance. On June 3, the MRC will be co-sponsoring a water quality sampling training event in Bellingham and on June 7 will be co-hosting the Blaine Water Fest in partnership with NSEA.

Snohomish: Lincoln reported that MRC members and staff will be conducting kelp surveys in July through September this summer. They are in the processes of choosing sites to survey and acquiring the necessary materials. MRC staff are also developing a mailer to Snohomish County boat owners to recruit volunteers for the DOE Vessel of Opportunity program to volunteer their vessels in case of an oil spill.

San Juan: Phil reported that at their May meeting, Terry Turner was elected as chair, Kathy Dolsen as vice chair, himself as MRC representative and Tom Temple as alternate. Phil met with Tom Mumford to discuss potential involvement in a kelp monitoring project for FY16. The MRC decided against a pinto abalone restoration project in the San Juans due to cost.

Skagit: Christine announced that Jamey Selleck will be replacing her as MRC representative to the Commission starting in June. She reported that 25 new volunteers recently completed the 2015 Salish Sea Stewards training and are already engaged in forage fish surveys, intertidal monitoring, and beach seining. Fidalgo Bay Day is scheduled for August 29.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 pm. The next meeting will be on June 26, 2015 via WebEx conference call.



May 29, 2015 – Commission Meeting Highlights

MRC Grant RFP & Project Presentations

MRC project proposals were due May 31 for 2015-16 grants.

- Representatives from each MRC presented a project for the upcoming year at the May 29 Commission meeting. The presentations were fantastic! See meeting minutes for specific questions or discussion items that resulted from the presentations.
- MRCs should be tracking whether or not they are on course to complete their current workplans (FY15) and spend out completely by September 30.

Upcoming Commission Meetings

The July 31 Commission meeting is scheduled for Snohomish County and will include a presentation by the Department of Ecology on net pen aquaculture.

- Background information on Northwest Straits Initiative involvement in this topic will be provided in advance of the June 26 WebEx conference call. MRC members interested in joining the discussion on net pens are welcome to attend either or both meetings.

Commission Business Items

Ginny provided an update on a few Commission staff activities, news and upcoming events:

- The 2014 Annual Report is now available in hard copy and [on the Commission's website](#).
- Dr. Ron Thom was appointed to the Commission by the Governor on May 5. Cecilia Gobin with the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission was appointed as Terry Williams' alternate.
- Funding for the Marine Debris Program has ended and Paul Argites finished up his work with the Commission in mid-May.
- [Call for sessions is now open](#) for the 2016 Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference – deadline June 30, 2015. It will be held in Vancouver, British Columbia, April 13-15, 2016. Ginny is on the Conference Program Committee; contact her if interested in being involved.

2015 MRC Conference

The 2015 MRC Conference will be held November 6-7 at the Lakeway Inn in Bellingham.

- Dr. Florian Graner is confirmed as the keynote speaker on Friday evening.
- Save the date cards were provided to MRC representatives to distribute to MRC members.
- The results are being tallied from a recent survey on session topics and ideas.
- Check the MRC Conference page for updates: <http://www.nwstraits.org/2015-mrc-conference>

Upcoming Events – See website for more details

June 3, 2015 – *Water Quality Monitoring Training* – Whatcom County Public Works

June 3, 2015 – *The Future of Fish on the North Olympic Peninsula* – Landing Mall, Port Angeles

June 4 & 18, 2015 – *Presentation Skills Training* – Padilla Bay Reserve

June 7, 2015 – *Blaine Water Fest* – Blaine Harbor

June 11, 2015 – *Community Forum on Ocean Health* – Fidalgo Bay Resort

June 13, 2015 – *Oiled Wildlife Training Part 2* – Clallam County Fairgrounds

June 26, 2015 – *Northwest Straits Commission Meeting* – WebEx Conference Call

June 26-27, 2015 – *International Pigeon Guillemot Appreciation Days* – Whidbey Island



Northwest Straits Commission
June 26, 2015 10:00 am – 12:00 pm
WebEx Conference Call

Attendees

Commission Members: Nan McKay (Chair), Jerry Masters (Vice Chair), Dale Moses (Jefferson), Phil Green (San Juan), Lenny Corin (Island), Lincoln Loehr (Snohomish), Ken Carrasco (Whatcom), Sheida Sahandy

Commission Staff: Ginny Broadhurst, Caroline Gibson, Sasha Horst, Holly Faulstich

Others in Attendance: Christine Woodward (Skagit), Joan Drinkwin (NWS Foundation), Suzanna Stoike (PSP), Christopher Krembs (Ecology), Mindy Roberts (Ecology)

Absent: Terry Williams, Jeff Ward, Ron Thom, Terrie Klinger, Jamey Selleck

Welcome and Introductions

Nan opened the meeting with introductions.

Approval of May Meeting Minutes

The minutes from the May 29, 2015 Northwest Straits Commission meeting were approved as written.

NWSC Committee Reports

Executive Committee: The executive committee (EC) did not meet in June. Jerry reported that the committee is looking for an additional MRC representative to serve on the executive committee as required by the by-laws. The EC is responsible for developing Commission meeting agendas and tackling organizational questions. The next EC meeting is scheduled for July 6 from 10 am – 11 am. Contact Jerry, Nan or Ginny if interested in serving on this committee or learning more about it.

External Relations Committee: Ginny reported that the external relations committee (ERC) met on June 2 and discussed progress on reaching local, state and federal officials with information about the work of the Commission and MRCs. The ERC reviewed and provided feedback on a communication strategy document and the updated sustainability plan for the Commission. Ginny will provide copies of these documents for discussion at the July Commission meeting.

Science Advisory Committee: Caroline reported that the science advisory committee members have been reviewing projects proposed by MRCs for the 2016 grant cycle. There are just a few projects left to be finalized.

Business Items

Commission staff updates



Ginny reported that results have been tallied from the MRC conference survey and six session topics were tentatively identified. The Commission and Foundation staff are working on narrowing down these priority topics and lining up speakers for the event. Suggestions for presenters are welcome and should be sent to Ginny.

Caroline reported that five MRCs are interested in testing the kelp survey protocol this summer. Island and Jefferson MRCs started field trials last week. Datasheets and the protocol are available on the Commission's website: http://www.nwstraits.org/media/1055/nwsc_kelpsurveyprotocol_final_2014.pdf Scan or send completed hardcopy datasheets to Caroline.

Commission staff coordinated a Community Forum on Ocean Health on June 11 in Anacortes. This was the 16th forum in the past three years and they will start up again in the fall.

Sasha and Ginny provided an update on MRC project proposals for the 2015-16 grant cycle. All applicable projects are being sent to the Science Advisory Committee for technical review. Four have been submitted in EAGL and three are still in review or need modifications. Sasha reported that deliverables and invoices for the second quarter of the 2014-15 grants have been reviewed, with two still requiring modifications for approval.

June 30 is the deadline for [submitting a session](#) to the 2016 Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference. Foundation and Commission staff are working together to coordinate session proposals. The conference will be held in Vancouver, BC, April 13-15, 2016.

The Commission partnered with the Coastal Training Program in June to provide a two-day presentation training for MRCs on how to explain science, share projects and build trust. It was highly effective.

Sasha reported that she's been in communication with MRC staff regarding a potential government shutdown in the event that a state budget is not passed by June 30. This would affect all Commission staff and all MRC grant agreements, as well as any MRC contractors. Sheida was optimistic that a deal would be reached at the last minute to avoid a shutdown.

Background on net pen issue

Ginny reported that Dept. of Ecology and NOAA are interested in presenting on the topic of net pen aquaculture at the July Commission meeting. In response to a request, Commission staff put together a one page summary of the Northwest Straits Initiative's involvement in the issue. Ginny explained that there are policy changes coming from agencies as well as new management practices and encouraged Commissioners to read through the materials and come prepared for the July meeting with questions.

Summer field trips

Ginny has been in communication with MRC chairs, staff and representatives about possible field trips this summer. The goal is to share the great work of the MRCs with county, city and state elected officials. Contact Ginny with additional ideas.



Change to September meeting date

The September Commission meeting in Clallam County is scheduled for the same date as the Dungeness River Festival (September 25). Ginny suggested moving it forward one week to October 2. A doodle poll will be sent out to Commissioners to determine if this date is feasible.

Derelict net removal celebration

Joan announced that there will be a derelict net removal celebration on August 13 at Boxcar Park in Port of Everett. Ginny has been involved in planning the event. A save-the-date card will be coming out soon.

Puget Sound federal funding

Sheida reported that the Puget Sound Partnership has been working with Representatives Kilmer and Heck to push for increased recognition and support for Puget Sound. Sheida recently returned from DC as a guest of America's Great Waters Coalition and had the opportunity to voice support for increased Puget Sound funding levels in the Interior Appropriations bill.

MRC Reports

Clallam: No representative present.

Whatcom: Ken announced that the Whatcom MRC co-hosted a water quality monitoring training on June 3, in which forty-two community members participated, and also hosted a booth at the Blaine Water Fest 2015. MRC staff recruited volunteers to assist with surveying shellfish harvesters along Drayton West Beach – a new recreational shellfish harvest area open from April 1 – October 31, 2015.

Jefferson: Dale reported that interviews for two new MRC member positions are scheduled for late June. The MRC is interested in working more closely with their Local Integrating Organization (LIO) and invited John Cambalik, Strait ERN Coordinator, to present at their June meeting. The MRC lost three of their six eelgrass buoys this winter and are working on relocating old gear and replacing the lost buoys.

Island: Lenny announced he will be resigning his position as MRC representative, effective July 2015. Ed Adams has volunteered to serve as the new rep. Linda Rhodes will be taking over for Leal Dickson as kelp lead when he moves off the island later this month. On June 26-27, the MRC will be co-sponsoring the International Guillemot Appreciation Days in partnership with the Whidbey Audubon Society. Emily Bishop is their new intern on the pigeon guillemot project.

San Juan: Phil reported that Patti Gobin from Tulalip Tribes has been appointed by the County Council to fill the tribal representation position on the MRC. They are collecting applications for two other open positions. The MRC was involved in multiple outreach events in June, including hosting a booth at the Solstice Day Parade Event and presenting Good Steward Awards. They also co-sponsored a presentation by Dr. Gary Greene that drew over 200 participants.

Skagit: Christine reported that at the MRC's June meeting, Pete Haase provided an update on forage fish surveys in Skagit County. Over 50 volunteers have helped in the past three years. Additionally, 25



new volunteers recently completed the 2015 Salish Sea Stewards training. Fidalgo Bay Day will be held August 29 at the Fidalgo Bay Resort.

Snohomish: Lincoln reported that MRC staff are developing an Instagram photo contest (using #CatchMoreCrabSnoCo) for the summer season to reduce crab pot loss. The MRC has selected three Snohomish County sites to survey bull kelp in July. The Snohomish and Island MRCs are co-hosting a picnic followed by a MRC meeting on September 16 at Clinton Beach Park on Whidbey Island.

Roundtable

Joan provided an update on Foundation projects, including Fort Townsend State Park (hoping to start construction this year) and Shannon Point – on track and likely to start construction next year. New officers were elected – Lenny Corin, President; Jay Lind, VP; Ken Carrasco, Secretary; Greg Ayers, Treasurer – but current officers will stay on through hiring of a new Executive Director.

Public Comment

None.

Invited Speakers

The Blog, El Nino, and the Drought in Puget Sound

Christopher Krembs, Marine Monitoring Unit, EAP, Ecology

Christopher provided an overview of large scale climatology impacts on Puget Sound region's rainfall, snowpack, streamflow, and marine water quality. He described the characteristics of the Blob (mass of warm water in the northern Pacific) and how it has affected ocean currents, marine ecosystems and inland weather. [Click here for a copy of the presentation.](#)

The NOAA Fisheries publication that Christopher mentioned, entitled, "*Changing Winds Explain Most Pacific Coast Warming*" can be found by [clicking here](#).

Drought and Pacific Ocean Influences on Puget Sound and the Salish Sea

Mindy Roberts, Marine Monitoring Unit, EAP, Ecology

Mindy discussed how different processes affect dissolved oxygen (DO) in the Salish Sea, including future population, land cover, snowpack, Pacific Ocean trends, and air temperature. The models predict that warm, low DO Puget Sound waters will persist through summer 2015. [Click here for a copy of the presentation.](#)

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 pm. The next meeting will be on July 31, 2015 in Snohomish County.



June 26, 2015 – Commission Meeting Highlights

Commission Business Items

Ginny provided an update on a few Commission staff activities, news and upcoming events:

- Commission and Foundation staff are working on coordinating sessions for the 2016 Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference. Call for abstracts coming soon – stay tuned.
- A derelict net removal celebration will be held on August 13 in Everett. Save-the-date card coming soon.
- The Commission's Executive Committee is looking for an MRC member to join their ranks – contact Nan or Ginny if interested in learning more. Their next meeting is scheduled for July 6.
- Ginny is soliciting ideas for possible field trips to see MRC projects this summer. The goal is to share the great work of the MRCs with county, city and state elected officials.

2015 MRC Conference

The 2015 MRC Conference will be held November 6-7 at the Lakeway Inn in Bellingham.

- Six main session topics were identified from the conference survey. Staff are working on narrowing down topics and lining up speakers. Suggestions/ideas are welcome.
- Dr. Florian Graner is confirmed as the keynote speaker on Friday evening.
- Check the MRC Conference page for updates: <http://www.nwstraits.org/2015-mrc-conference>

2015-16 MRC Grants

Sasha and Ginny provided an update on MRC project proposals for the 2015-16 grant cycle.

- All applicable projects are being sent to the Science Advisory Committee for technical review. Four have been submitted in EAGL and three are still in review or need modifications.
- Deliverables and invoices for the second quarter of the 2014-15 grants have been reviewed, with two still requiring modifications for approval.
- MRCs should be tracking whether or not they are on course to complete their current workplans and spend out completely by September 30.

Commission Meeting Dates and Topics

The July Commission meeting will include a presentation by the Department of Ecology on net pen aquaculture.

- See attached background information on Northwest Straits Initiative involvement in this topic. MRC members interested in joining the discussion on net pens are welcome to attend.
- Participants encouraged to read through the materials and come to the meeting prepared with questions.

The September Commission meeting in Clallam County is scheduled for the same date as the Dungeness River Festival (September 25). A doodle poll has been sent to Commissioners to reschedule (either Sept. 18 or Oct. 2).

Upcoming Events – See website for more details

July 31, 2015 – *Northwest Straits Commission Meeting* – Snohomish County Campus

July 5, 2015 – *Ediz Hood Beach Clean Up* – Port Angeles

August 13, 2015 – *Derelict Net Removal Celebration* - Everett

August 16-20, 2015 – *American Fisheries Society Conference* – Portland

August 28, 2015 - *Northwest Straits Commission Meeting* – WebEx

August 29, 2015 – *Fidalgo Bay Day* – Fidalgo Bay RV Resort

September 11-13, 2015 – *Wooden Boat Festival* – Port Townsend

September 12-26, 2015 – *Whatcom Water Weeks* - Bellingham



Northwest Straits Commission
July 31, 2015 • 9:00 am – 3:00 pm
Snohomish County Administrative Building, Everett

Attendees

Commission Members: Jamey Selleck (Skagit), Shannon Davis (alternate - Jefferson), Jeff Ward (Clallam), Phil Green (San Juan), Ken Carrasco (Whatcom), Lincoln Loehr (Snohomish), Ed Adams (Island), Nan McKay (Chair), Jerry Masters (vice chair), Ron Thom

Additional MRC Representation: Kathleen Herrmann, Francesca Perez, Tom Hoban, Taylor McDowell (Snohomish), Tom Temple (San Juan), Anna Toledo (Island)

Commission Staff: Ginny Broadhurst, Caroline Gibson, Sasha Horst

Others in Attendance: Joan Drinkwin (NW Straits Foundation), Jill Clark (NW Straits Foundation), Suzanna Stoike (Puget Sound Partnership, by phone)

Absent: Terry Williams, Terrie Klinger, Sheida Sahandy, Dale Moses

Welcome and Introductions

Nan opened the meeting with introductions.

Kelp Monitoring in Snohomish County

Lincoln Loehr shared information about the work that Snohomish MRC has done to pilot the kelp survey protocol, including maps of locations surveyed and preliminary results, recommendations to improve the protocols, and equipment suggestions for others undertaking surveys elsewhere. Caroline Gibson noted that there will be a meeting later in the fall of people who piloted the protocol to revise it based on field trials.

The MRC was also featured in the Everett Herald newspaper (<http://bit.ly/1luaQFB>) for the kelp monitoring.

Approval of June Meeting Minutes

The minutes from the June 26, 2015 Northwest Straits Commission meeting were approved as written.

Committee Reports

➤ **Executive Committee:**

- Jerry reported that following the Commission elections, the Executive Committee is in need of additional MRC representation. Jamey Selleck and Phil Green expressed an interest in more information, and will be included on correspondence to participate in the August committee meeting.

- The committee revised and updated the Initiative Sustainability Plan, originally adopted in 2012. A draft was presented to the Commission for approval. The Commission moved and approved by consensus to adopt the sustainability plan with minor edits.
- **External Relations Committee:** Ginny shared a copy of the Commission's communication plan, and described its purpose. She encouraged people to read it to understand how the work we are doing fits into our communication strategy.
- **Science Advisory Committee:** Ron Thom reported on the recent work of the committee, which included review of the MRC proposals. He discussed the role of the science advisory group in the MRC conference, including assistance with finding speakers. The committee also discussed datasets that the MRCs could help with, and recommended that MRC participate in the Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference in Vancouver in April 2016. He noted that there are a number of sessions on citizen science that would be well-suited for MRC presentations.

MRC Reports

Clallam: Jeff Ward reported that the MRC is focused on community visibility, including their beach cleanup on the 5th of July. They hosted a talk about the oyster restoration project with more than 30 people in attendance. Their biggest annual event is coming up, the Dungeness River Festival, where they will share information about the MRC's work. The MRC will also host a public event to celebrate the work of their interns.

Island: Ed Adams reported that this is the first meeting for him as the new representative of the MRC. The MRC recently had a presentation on kelp from (WHO), and they are hosting a joint meeting with the Snohomish MRC on September 16.

Jefferson: Shannon Davis reported that the MRC did not meet in July, and will host a member picnic in August. The MRC has new members (NAMES).

San Juan: Phil Green reported that the MRC has focused their work in July on the Citizen Advisory Group for Salmon Recovery.

Skagit: Jamey Selleck reported that the August MRC meeting was in conflict with the derelict gear removal celebration so the MRC will cancel their meeting in order to attend. The MRC will host their annual Fidalgo Bay Day on August 29 and encouraged everyone to attend. Jamey also noted that the MRC's Salish Sea Stewards program was successful this year, and volunteers have already contributed over 600 hours.

Snohomish: Lincoln Loehr reported on the MRC's recreational crabbing outreach and Instagram photo contest (#CatchMoreCrabSnoCo) that is now underway. Kathleen Herrmann shared a recent update on their nearshore construction project that will be going out for re-bid next week.

Whatcom: Ken Carrasco reported that the MRC recently hosted a presentation in Birch Bay about algae. The MRC will also be hosting two events as part of the annual Whatcom Water Weeks celebration, including a beach cleanup at Locust Beach and an interpretive event at Larrabee.



Northwest Straits Foundation update

Joan Drinkwin invited everyone to attend the August 13 derelict gear removal project celebration at 11am at Boxcar Park in Everett and stated that the NWS Foundation is providing sponsorship support for MRC events up to \$500.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Shoreline Planning: Update on Net Pen Policy and Technical Guidance

Laura Hoberecht, Aquaculture Coordinator for NOAA explained the agency's role in aquaculture and turned the presentation over to Tim Gates from WA Department of Ecology to present information about the siting of net pens in Washington and integration with shoreline management planning process. Tim talked about the polarization of opinions about net pens and stated that Dept of Ecology is planning to hold a fact finding forum with a neutral facilitator in October to help work through some of the issues. Tim explained that the Dept of Ecology has been working with counties in cases where concerns have been raised about fin fish net pens and looking for solutions that fit with local and state needs. Dept of Ecology will be updating the Shoreline Master Program rule and Tim shared the timeline. A discussion followed this presentation,

Puget Sound Partnership Update

Marc Daily provided a written update. Technical difficulties with a conference call connection prevented Suzanna Stoike from participating during this update. Ginny explained that there are important processes occurring to update the Action Agenda, the local ecosystem recovery plans and to develop near term actions at the local level. She encouraged all MRCs to work closely with the appropriate Local Integrating Organizations to participate in these processes and integrate MRC projects. An MRC staff meeting is planned for Aug 11 that will include an overview of these processes by a Partnership staff person.

Commission Business Items

Caroline explained that there is new genetic study that provides information on endangered rockfish species. There may be implications to de-list canary and bocaccio because the Puget Sound fish were found to not be genetically distinct from the coastal species.

Roundtable

Ed asked about additional opportunities to discuss net pens and Ginny encouraged Commission members to provide feedback on topics that they want to see on future Commission agendas and other Commission forums.

Ron reminded everyone about the Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference and is seeking ideas for speakers who can provide a "state of the Salish Sea" talk for a keynote.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 2:45 pm. The next meeting will be on August 28, 2015 via WebEx conference call.



minutes

**Northwest Straits Commission
August 28, 2015 10:00 am – 12:00 pm
WebEx Conference Call**

Attendees

Commission Members: Nan McKay (Chair), Jerry Masters (Vice Chair), Shannon Davis (Alt. Jefferson), Jeff Ward (Clallam), Jamey Selleck (Skagit), Phil Green (San Juan), Ed Adams (Island), Ken Carrasco (Whatcom), Marc Daily (Alt-Puget Sound Partnership), Terrie Klinger, Ron Thom, Cecelia Gobin

Commission Staff: Caroline Gibson, Sasha Horst, Robert Harvey

Others in Attendance: Lucas Hart (Jefferson), Tom Temple (San Juan), Helle Andersen (Clallam)

Absent: Terry Williams, Sheida Sahandy, Lincoln Loehr, Dale Moses

Welcome and Introductions

Nan opened the meeting with a roll call for introductions.

Approval of July Meeting Minutes

The minutes from the July 31, 2015 Northwest Straits Commission meeting were approved as written.

NWSC Committee Reports

Executive Committee: Jerry gave an update on the most recent meeting of the committee (written summary provided), noting that having Phil and Jamey attending and representing MRCs was beneficial. He reiterated the need for MRCs to continue seeking funds and in-kind support from local businesses and other sources; this is an important component of the Initiative's sustainability plan.

Science Advisory Committee: Ron noted that there has not been a meeting of the committee since the last Commission meeting. The committee is interested in helping with conference session planning, and previously recommended two speakers for the event, which resulted in invitations being extended for the kelp and rockfish recovery sessions. The committee is available for advising MRCs as needed. They expect to meet next (by conference call) in late September.



minutes

Business Items

Commission staff updates

Caroline shared highlights from the written summary, particularly noting the success of the August 13 Northwest Straits Initiative derelict gear celebration and her recent participation in the American Fisheries Society 145th annual meeting. She also provided an update on Commission hiring, with interviews underway to fill Holly's position. Caroline will be leaving the Commission later this fall to serve as Executive Director of the Northwest Straits Foundation, and a job announcement is posted to fill her current position.

Sasha gave a brief update on the status of current MRC grants, and asked the Commission for approval to move forward with the 2015-16 MRC project proposals. Marc Daily from the Puget Sound Partnership emphasized that all monitoring projects should link to PSEMP where possible. Caroline confirmed that communications are ongoing with PSEMP and MRCs will give presentations to relevant workgroups where appropriate. After a brief discussion, the Commission approved the MRC project list as written.

Sasha also shared the announcement of funding to be awarded from NOAA to the Commission for additional outreach on ocean acidification in the 18 months.

Puget Sound Partnership Update

Marc Daily noted that there are three groups of regional experts (habitat, stormwater, shellfish) soliciting a request for Near Term Actions in September. He emphasized that all near term actions with geographic specificity must come through the local LIO process, and MRCs will need to integrate with those. Discussions are ongoing in Skagit County (where there is not yet an LIO) and this will be addressed in the pending solicitation.

Marc also underscored the importance of MRC site visits with legislators and ongoing efforts by Ginny and Jeff Parsons (PSP) to ensure that local elected officials and state legislators know what's going on in their districts. Hopes that all MRCs will host a field trip in coming months.

MRC Reports

In addition to the written reports, MRC representatives shared highlights of their work in the past month:

Whatcom: Ken reported that 40-50 people attended their recent talk about algae in Birch Bay. They will participate in the upcoming Whatcom Water Weeks, and are hosting two events.

Snohomish: There were no representatives from Snohomish County on the call. Jerry Masters had attended their most recent meeting and reported that no contractors responded with bids for their nearshore restoration project. Possibly this is the wrong time of the year, hopefully it will go out for re-bid in 2016.



minutes

Skagit: Jamey shared the Fidalgo Bay Day poster and invited people to attend the event. He also noted that he had presented at the American Fisheries Society conference and included information on the Skagit MRC nearshore restoration project in his presentation, which resulted in interest by WDFW in how this may inform the habitat group.

San Juan: Phil reported that the MRC now has a full complement, with two new members appointed this week. The MRC recently hosted a booth at the county fair. He also noted that MRC member Laura Arnold has been tracking and commenting on the County SMP on behalf of the MRC, and that kelp pilot surveys began this week.

Jefferson: Shannon reported that their MRC had a lengthy follow up discussion about net pens following the July Commission meeting, and agreed on the need to be more involved in the Hood Canal LIO (while continuing involvement in the Strait ERN). They also have two new members, and hosted a group picnic. The eelgrass protection zone is expanding in Port Townsend and new signage will be installed soon. She also invited people to attend the upcoming Wooden Boat Festival Sept. 11-13, where the MRC will host a booth.

Island: Ed reported that their MRC hosted a recent presentation on seastar wasting disease. Their upcoming September meeting will be a joint meeting with the Snohomish MRC. He reported that their kelp survey teams are learning how to navigate safely in challenging kayak areas. The MRC's pigeon guillemot surveys are completed early this year.

Clallam: Jeff shared information about their recent intern celebration, where each intern presented their work as a poster. The MRC also recently co-hosted a well-attended event on sea level rise on the Peninsula. He invited people to attend the upcoming Dungeness River Festival on September 25, where the MRC will have a booth highlighting their Olympia oyster work and other projects.

Roundtable

Ron Thom noted recent observations of enhanced Canada geese grazing on eelgrass beds, and wondered whether any others have heard about it. The geese are damaging to the beds, as they eat the rhizome in addition to the blade, unlike Brant, which eat just the blade.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 11:10 am. The next meeting will be on October 2, 2015 in Clallam County at the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribal Center's Red Cedar Room. There is opportunity for a tour of the carving shed by master carver Dale Faulstich for those who are interested.



minutes

Northwest Straits Commission
October 2, 2015 10:00 am – 3:00 pm
Red Cedar Room, Jamestown S'Klallam Tribal Center

Attendees

Commission Members: Nan McKay (Chair), Jerry Masters (vice Chair), Phil Green (San Juan), Shannon Davis (alt. Jefferson), Jamey Selleck (Skagit), Ed Adams (Island), Ken Carrasco (Whatcom), Lincoln Loehr (Snohomish), Jeff Ward (Clallam), Ron Thom.

Commission Staff: Caroline Gibson, Sasha Horst, Nicole Jordan, Ginny Broadhurst

Others in Attendance: Joan Drinkwin (Northwest Straits Foundation), Lyn Muench, Alan Clark and Helen Andersen (Clallam MRC), Annika Fain, Jen Benn (Puget Sound Partnership), Judith Morris (Rep. Derek Kilmer)

Absent: Terry Williams, Sheida Sahandy, Dale Moses, Terrie Klinger

Welcome and Introductions

Nan opened the meeting with roll call for introductions. Nicole Jordan was introduced as the new Northwest Straits Commission program coordinator.

Judith Morris from Representative Derek Kilmer's office joined the meeting and noted that Reps. Kilmer and Heck recently proposed the [PUGET SOS](#) bill to call for recognition of Puget Sound as a water body of national significance. Jen Benn from the Puget Sound Partnership had a summary of the bill, noting that Puget Sound is the largest estuary in the country by water volume.

Approval of August Meeting Minutes

The minutes from the August 28 meeting were approved as written.

Clallam MRC at the Dungeness River Festival

Lyn presented information about the Dungeness River Festival, which happens annually just west of Sequim. The festival showcased 22 exhibits and over 3,000 visitors (900 children). This year's Clallam MRC booth included live geoducks, live Pacific oysters and Olympia oysters with posters displayed, made by interns. The booth was interactive and children were excited to experience the animals up close. The goal



minutes

was to draw people in and recruit volunteers so Clallam MRC has more help for surveys and monitoring projects in upcoming years. The event also showcased posters produced by the MRC interns, including one on how to use Google earth as a monitor for oil spills. More information on the event can be found here: <http://www.clallamcountymrc.org/projects/education-outreach/community-events/>

Committee Reports

Executive Committee: Jerry Masters commented on the importance of spreading the word of committee's work. The Puget Sound Recovery Caucus Bill was brought up as an important item to monitor in the coming months as it continues to develop. The committee discussed net pens and Ginny requested input on how the Commission should address the topic in the coming months.

External Relations Committee: Ginny gave an update on recent outreach from the committee to the state legislature. The committee discussed efforts to request local support for MRCs. The committee considered holding a joint meeting between the Commission and Foundation board at the conference, but it was decided there is not enough time and early December may be a more appropriate time.

Science Advisory Committee: Ron shared how the Science Advisory Committee will be involved in the conference in November. The Science Advisory Committee is interested in providing technical guidance to the Commission on future net pen discussions. They plan to participate in a stakeholder forum on net pens with the University of Washington Forestry and Environmental Department and will share the technical summary resulting from the forum.

MRC Support through the Northwest Straits Foundation

Joan Drinkwin highlighted the areas in the Initiative's Sustainability Plan that unite the Northwest Straits Foundation with the MRCs. The Sustainability Plan goal is \$300,000 for program support to MRCs and \$70,000 (\$10,000/ MRC) in pass through funds for each county. The Foundation also provides general support to MRCs.

Joan described how funds are put to use as tangible projects throughout the seven MRC counties. She also shared a breakdown of where funds are spent when they pass through the Foundation. She then opened the floor for discussion on what the Foundation's support for MRCs should involve. Ginny suggested carrying the questions over to the Foundation and Commission executive committee meetings to allow for more thorough discussion.

MRC Reports

In addition to the written reports, MRC representatives shared highlights of their work in the past month:

minutes

Clallam: Jeff Ward updated everyone on the kelp survey project. The update focused on the MRC's approach to searching for monitoring sites and assessing various approaches to kelp monitoring. They reported being a little behind in their survey goal for the season as some of their local sites can be dangerous and difficult to access at times. They recommend a safety certification as part of the program to insure volunteer safety while surveying kelp beds.

Skagit: Jamey Selleck updated everyone on the successful funding of their Shannon Point Nearshore Restoration project design and permitting, through a grant to the Northwest Straits Foundation from the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Skagit MRC reported a huge success with the Fidalgo Bay Day event, recording over 250 visitors. Jamey expressed continued interest in recruiting new members and a new alternate to the Commission for Skagit MRC. Jamey also discussed the MRC's use of drones and GoPros to catalogue some of the beach restoration work.

Jefferson: Shannon Davis reported that Maureen Goff has left the MRC and will be replaced by Nam Siu, who was previously an alternate. The Wooden Boat Festival was a success with the addition of the model rain garden which drew in a crowd and allowed Jefferson MRC to reach more people with information about their projects. They have extended Port Townsend eelgrass buoys further south along the shoreline. An ad on behalf of the Jefferson MRC ran in the newspaper describing the importance of eelgrass habitat.

Island: Ed Adams updated everyone on volunteer pilot Gregg Ridder's work on completing the report on 2014 eelgrass data. The summer Pigeon Guillemot monitoring is complete. The phytoremediation report has been completed. Most recently, the MRC had a nice potluck with Snohomish MRC where the whole team could get together and celebrate their work.

San Juan: Phil reported new members, Cheryl Kummer and David Tribolet. The MRC had a display at the San Juan County Fair with a mini golf game. While the miniature golf was very successful with 1500 participating, only 10% of those had conversations with MRC representatives. San Juan MRC wants to work on alternatives for future events. San Juan MRC is working on aerial mapping that will show streams coming into Deer Harbor. Phil is involve with the Sea Doc dive team focused on subtidal monitoring. He reported that sea star wasting disease is still an issue and has been seen by many divers in the last few months.

Snohomish: Lincoln reported that Kathleen Herrmann presented at a Seascape Ecology Conference in Scotland. Snohomish MRC staff mailed letters and brochures to landowners in Port Susan offering free site visits to assess shoreline erosion management. The Snohomish MRC partnered with Natural Resources Consultants, Inc. to continue removing derelict crab pots, with 30 pots collected on September 17. They are also in the process of getting landowner permission to access tidelands and deploy mussel cages at

minutes

selected sites. This will be Lincoln's last commission meeting and he expects that the current alternate, Paul Clampitt, will be attending future meetings in his place.

Whatcom: Ned Currence, a biologist with Nooksack tribe presented at the recent MRC meeting. He reported high temperatures and low flow in tributaries of Whatcom County. Implications from these water changes are not widely understood yet. As part of Whatcom Water Weeks, Whatcom MRC hosted an educational event on Squalicum Beach centered on beach life and hosted a beach cleanup at Locust Beach. The Whatcom MRC wants to hold a retreat but no official plans have been made.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

MRCs in Korea?

Ginny presented highlights from her trip to South Korea, where she and one other person represented the United States. She learned about the impacts from a major land reclamation project – the largest seawall in the world. A restoration project in Garolim Bay was one of the success stories with significant community support, but the country has a long way to go in organizing effective environmental stewardship efforts. Ginny was recruited to present about the Northwest Straits Commission as an example of citizen involvement in coastal protection.

DNR Habitat Conservation Plan

Dave Palazzi shared with everyone the Aquatic Lands Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). The plan is focused on implementing management practices that concern overwater structures, aquaculture and log booming and emphasizes habitat conservation and recovery. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) incorporates habitat stewardship measures based on the conditions of each site. DNR is currently working on protecting forage fish habitat and submerged aquatic vegetation by avoiding sensitive areas and minimizing impacts.

Dave showed many examples of how DNR's work aligns with the work of the MRCs through projects such as semi-transparent docking, ocean acidification monitoring and eelgrass protection.

Business Items

Commission staff updates



minutes

Conference planning has been moving along well. Everyone was cautioned to make sure their hotel reservations are at the government rate of \$89 and to book a room before October 6. Registration for the conference is open through October 19.

Ginny announced that Lucas Hart has been hired as Marine Program Manager. He will begin on November 2. Caroline will start as Executive Director at the Northwest Straits Foundation on October 26.

Sasha is working with MRC staff on grant agreements for the MRC's 2015-2016 grants.

Ginny announced that she is speaking at San Juan County Council on October 5 and will be discussing local funding support for MRCs.

A list of proposed 2016 meeting dates was presented to the group. Further discussion is needed about retreat planning and a joint Commission/Foundation meeting. The Executive Committee will discuss this at their next meeting.

Jamestown S'Klallam carving shed tour

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 for a tour of the carving shed.

Next meeting

The next meeting of the Commission will be on Friday, December 4 from 10am-12pm by conference call.



**Northwest Straits Commission
December 4, 2015 • 10:00am – 12:00pm
WebEx Meeting**

Attendees

Commission Members: Jamey Selleck (Skagit), Jeff Ward (Clallam), Phil Green (San Juan), Ken Carrasco (Whatcom), Ed Adams (Island), Nan McKay (Chair), Jerry Masters (vice chair), Ron Thom, Dale Moses (Jefferson), Paul Clampitt (Snohomish), Cecelia Gobin (alt)

Additional MRC Representation: Lincoln Loehr (Snohomish)

Commission Staff: Ginny Broadhurst, Nicole Jordan, Sasha Horst, Lucas Hart

Others in Attendance: Caroline Gibson (NW Straits Foundation), Tom Cowan, Jesse Nichols (WWU student), John Githens

Absent: Terry Williams, Sheida Sahandy

Welcome and Introductions

Nan opened the meeting with introductions.

Approval of October Meeting Minutes

The minutes from the October Northwest Straits Commission meeting were approved with changes.

Committee Reports

- **Executive Committee**
Jerry Masters commented on the last paragraph of the report and the retreat. He emphasized the intent of the retreat is to be focused on progress. Ginny sent out proposed questions, but needs additional feedback. The upcoming meeting is December 14, 2015. Ginny will resend meeting dates to committee members.
- **Science Advisory Committee**
Ron Thom reported that a representative of the Science Advisory Committee will attend an upcoming event on netpens but the meeting time has not yet been set, more information will follow. Lucas Hart and Tom Mumford set up a Kelp Monitoring Workshop in Port Townsend from 10:00am to 3:00pm on December 5. Lucas reported high interest in the workshop.

Commission Projects/Business Items

Conference debrief/survey results: The survey results showed that people were generally very pleased with the conference, including speakers and topics. Sasha reminded everyone the presentations and conference materials are available on the [website](#).

Puget SOS bill ([HR 3630](#)) discussion: Nan McKay expressed interest in submitting a letter of support from the Commission and following up with Senator Patty Murray's office after the letter is sent to see about the progress for the bill through the Senate. The bill is growing in support, including interest from the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission. Several commission members expressed interest in reviewing the comment letter and Ron Thom offered a review by the science advisory committee.

NOAA grant - Ocean Acidification workshops for local leaders: Ginny explained that the Commission received a grant that was approved by NOAA in September. Part of Lucas Hart's job will be to lead workshops on ocean acidification, with work on the project starting in January. An advisory group was solicited earlier this year and all have agreed to continue their participation. Ginny offered to send the longer proposal to anyone wishing to see it. Jeff Ward expressed interest in including information about sea level rise due to the expressed concern of the public in Clallam County.

2016 Calendar: Everyone present confirmed their availability for the retreat dates as written. Alternates will also be invited. The January Commission meeting will be in person rather than by WebEx, as noted in an earlier draft. The updated calendar will be sent out by Nicole so people may plan their schedules.

Check in on Strategic Plan implementation: Ginny asked people who were not involved in the creation of the document to become familiar with it and offered to be a resource for those with questions. The Executive Committee will review the plan and identify some goals to check in on at the January Commission meeting. Dale suggested updating the document with information from the Foundation.

Near Term Actions (NTA) Discussion

The Puget Sound Partnership is soliciting proposals for Near Term Actions to include in their 2016 Action Agenda update. Ginny reviewed the summary of Near Term Actions proposed by the MRCs, Commission and Foundation. The Commission has the opportunity to submit Near Term Actions for Skagit MRC because they do not have a Local Integrating Organization. Everything except regional NTAs have been submitted. LIOs have a ranking process for local Near Term Actions. Ginny commented that it's not clear how cross-cutting issues such as stewardship, outreach and education will be ranked given the focus on the three strategic initiatives.

MRC Reports

In addition to the written reports provided, MRC representatives highlighted the following:

Clallam:

Jeff Ward shared that the [climate vulnerability report](#) is now available for the Olympic Peninsula. The grant from the Commission for 2015-16 went through Clallam County review and was approved in mid-November. Jeff examined the technical reviews of Near Term Actions (NTAs) and reported they looked good.

Jefferson:

Dale Moses announced changes in Jefferson MRC members including the resignations of Lucas Hart and Maureen Goff. He commented on the ongoing success of the rain gardens. Jefferson MRC reported struggling with the challenge of balancing their attention to both LIOs in their region (Hood Canal LIO and the Straits ERN) for NTA proposals.



San Juan: Marta Branch announced that she is leaving as staff of the San Juan MRC. The county will be hiring a replacement and interested applicants should check the [San Juan MRC](#) website. Ginny and Caroline attended San Juan MRC's recent retreat in Friday Harbor focused on developing next year's work plan.

Skagit: Jamey Selleck reported that there was no November meeting for the Skagit MRC. Jamey commented on the changes in cockle biomass throughout the region and expressed interest in investigating the trend. Jamey also shared that construction is complete at the Bowman Bay restoration site. He will meet with the Puget Sound Partnership to discuss options for creating a Local Integrating Organization (LIO) for Skagit County.

Snohomish: Paul Clampitt welcomed Autumn Moore as Marine Resources Program Assistant. The recent Port Susan Landowner Workshop drew in several people interested in bulk head removal and was a success. The oil spill preparedness project met on November 18 with presenters sharing information on their awareness and response efforts. The caged mussel studies' cages will be retrieved in the spring.

Whatcom: Ken Carrasco reported Whatcom MRC as actively recruiting members from Whatcom County, specifically northern areas to better represent the diverse population. The 2015-16 MRC grant was approved by Whatcom County Council on November 24, 2015. Whatcom MRC hosted a water quality event and salmon viewing tour in partnership with NSEA on November 14 at North Chuckanut Bay which drew approximately 50 people.

Island: Ed reported Island MRC is in the process of recruiting four new members. New NTAs from Island MRC didn't make it on the NTA handout, so Ginny will send an updated NTA matrix. Since the last Commission meeting, Island MRC partnered with the Northwest Straits Foundation to host a SHARP shoreline landowners' workshop on Camano where roughly 25 people attended.

Roundtable

Nan brought up an article in the Seattle Times on an increase in fish diversity in the sound and suggested we pay attention to the emerging information as it becomes available.

Lenny announced Island MRC is proposing to host forums on ocean acidification as part of a Near Term Action that was missing from the list in the handout. Another NTA proposal is from Washington Sea-Grant developing a map on sea level rise and wave monitoring and the Island MRC would partner with this.

Ken came across a new hybrid vessel that will be interesting for those in the marine industry. This led into the topic of boat traffic in the Salish Sea as an ongoing issue requiring attention, including the effect of boat traffic on orcas.

The Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference is April 13-15, 2016 in Vancouver, BC. Jamey Selleck will be attending and presenting. Lucas will be presenting on Kelp Monitoring at the conference. Ginny is co-chairing a session on projects associated with ocean acidification.

Public Comment

John Githens commented on his recent presentation to the Island County MRC on using drones for kelp surveys. He would like to share his file with anyone who is interested.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 11:40 am. The next meeting will be on January 29 in Island County.

DRAFT