**Meeting:** Northwest Straits Commission  
**Location:** WebEx Conference Call  
**Date:** September 29, 2017  
**Time:** 10:00 am to 12:00 pm

To join the WebEx meeting, click here. Enter your name and email address and click “Join.”  
For audio conference only, dial: 1-240-454-0887 access code: 807 152 644

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Presenter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10:00-10:10</td>
<td>Welcome and Introductions</td>
<td>Nan McKay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:10-10:30</td>
<td>NWSC Committee Reports</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Executive Committee</td>
<td>Jamey Selleck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>External Relations Committee</td>
<td>Tom Cowan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Science Advisory Committee</td>
<td>Ron Thom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30-10:45</td>
<td>Net pen overview/update</td>
<td>Amy Windrope, WDFW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:45-11:15</td>
<td>MRC Reports</td>
<td>MRC Representatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:15-11:25</td>
<td>Puget Sound Partnership (PSP) update</td>
<td>Karin Berkholtz, PSP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:25-11:30</td>
<td>NWS Foundation update</td>
<td>Caroline Gibson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30-11:45</td>
<td>Business Items</td>
<td>Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2018 proposed Commission meeting dates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kelp Recovery Plan update</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Kelp monitoring strategy update</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Kelp Condition Index</td>
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<td></td>
<td>MRC role in rockfish recovery plan</td>
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<td></td>
<td>NWSI presentation to F&amp;W Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:45-11:55</td>
<td>Round table</td>
<td>All</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:55-12:00</td>
<td>Public Comment</td>
<td>All</td>
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August 25, 2017–10:00 AM-3:00 PM
Pacific Rim Institute, 180 Parker Road, Coupeville, WA, Island County
Northwest Straits Commission meeting

Attendees:
Commission Members: Nan McKay (Chair), Jerry Masters, Tom Cowan, Doug Stark (Whatcom), Terry Turner (San Juan-alternate), Elsa Schwartz (Island MRC-alternate), Jeff Taylor (Jefferson-alternate), Ron Thom

Commission Staff: Rich Childers, Nicole Jordan, Sasha Horst, Lucas Hart

Others in Attendance: Keith Higman (Island County Public Health Department-Director), Caroline Gibson (Northwest Straits Foundation), Tom Doerge, Mel Malkoff, Anna Toledo (Island MRC staff), Tom Mumford, Cheryl Lowe (Jefferson MRC staff), Lisa Kaufman (Northwest Straits Foundation)

Absent: Dale Moses (Jefferson), Jamey Selleck (Skagit, Vice Chair), Sheida Sahandy, Cecilia Gobin (Tribal), Ken Carrasco (San Juan), Alan Clark (Clallam), Ed Adams (Island), Paul Clampitt (Snohomish)

Welcome and Introductions
Nan McKay opened the meeting and introduced Keith Higman, Director of Island County Public Health Department. Keith welcomed and thanked the Northwest Straits Commission for bringing the meeting to Island County.

The minutes from the July Northwest Straits Commission meeting were approved.

Northwest Straits Commission - committee reports

Executive Committee
Nan said the committee discussed purchasing restrictions on equipment with EPA grant funds. The issue is somewhat alleviated for MRCs in the coming year as they will have state funds that allow equipment purchases. Staff have not been successful at getting clarification from EPA as to what constitutes equipment vs. supplies.

External Relations Committee
Tom Cowan said the committee is working on identifying new priorities now that state funding is secured.

Science Advisory Committee
Ron said the committee assisted in reviewing the recent MRC grant proposals and provided feedback.
Education and outreach in Island County
Barbara Bennett, Island MRC member, presented on the outreach efforts of Island MRC as they tie into the overall work of the Northwest Straits Initiative. The MRC identified key decision makers within their county governments and presented a questionnaire to focus communications with the county. The Commission discussed communication and outreach to elected officials within other MRC and suggested Barbara’s presentation might be a good item to present at the annual conference.

MRC reports
Monthly reports for each MRC are available by visiting this link: http://bit.ly/2x6OdYZ

Clallam
Clallam provided a written report. The three interns are working on completing their projects and summarizing the outcomes in posters for a presentation on August 28 at the Intern Celebration event. MRC members are continuing recreational crabber outreach throughout the entire crabbing season.

Island
Elsa said the MRC is working on monitoring eelgrass beds which were surveyed by underwater videography. Gregg Ridder completed aerial photography of Whidbey and Camano and Albert Foster has conducted monitoring with multi-beam sonar at several sites.

Jefferson
Jeff said the MRC is preparing for outreach at the Wooden Boat Festival. They completed installation of all summer navigational buoys for the Port Townsend waterfront no-anchor zone. All 7 Mystery Bay buoys were checked in early August and are still in place.

San Juan
Terry said a subcommittee met to plan for three meetings in late October to address issues of vessel traffic and noise, prey availability, and pollution to the southern resident killer whale population. The MRC is working on a project to restore vegetation at the Orcas Landing Experience.

Skagit
Nate said Skagit MRC member, Kit Rawson, passed away. Paul Dinnel is working with WA Department of Fish and Wildlife to distribute and monitor stacks of ceramic tiles at four locations in Fidalgo Bay to monitor native oyster settlement. 22 people are now on the wait list for next year’s Salish Sea Stewards training.

Snohomish
Tom said the MRC is working on kelp monitoring. Elisa Dawson and Zoe Zilz attended the Warm Beach Summerfest on August 12, 2017, focusing on initial outreach on shoreline armor removal—four property owners signed up for site visits.

**Whatcom**
Doug said Laurie Caskey-Schreiber resigned from the MRC—the MRC has two prospective candidates for their vacancies. The MRC is getting ready for several events including Bellingham SeaFeast, the culminating event of Whatcom Water Week. The MRC will have their booth amongst several others.

**Puget Sound Partnership (PSP) update**
Rich updated on behalf of the PSP. The PSP hired several new people including Jennifer Lee as the new Planning Director, Stacy Vynne as the Salmon Recovery Manager and Tristan Peter-Contesse as the Boards Program Manager. The Partnership is beginning to feel the effects of the lack of a 2017-2019 capital budget, which has not yet passed in the Washington State Legislature.

**Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) update**
Caroline said the NWSF is feeling the effects of the capital budget stagnation on their restoration projects. She is focused on building donors through fundraising efforts to businesses and corporations. The NWSF will host a silent auction at the 2017 MRC Conference.

**Public comment**
The Commission discussed the most effective strategy to approach net pens.

**Business items**
**Zooplankton monitoring program update**
Lucas said Long Live the Kings currently manages the [Marine Survival Project](#), which aims to understand factors impacting salmon with zooplankton monitoring as a piece of the project. Lucas reported that the bottleneck in these projects is the lack of taxonomists to do species identification on collected samples. With past expressed interest by MRCs to do zooplankton monitoring on their own, this hurdle would have to be overcome to build a meaningful MRC project.

**Marine renewable energy workshops**
Commission staff updated on the two Marine Renewable Energy seminars put on in partnership with Washington Sea Grant and Jefferson and Skagit MRCs. Each MRCs hosted an event, one in Padilla Bay on September 8 and another at Port Townsend on September 21. Commission staff helped with promotion of the events.

**Commission topic list review**
Commission members were asked to review the list of commission meeting topics and provide feedback.

**Locations for 2018 MRC Conference**
Commission staff are previewing locations for the 2018 MRC conference – the Northwest Straits Initiative’s 20th anniversary.

**Ecosystem health**
Ron Thom and Tom Mumford presented on their work to help define ecosystem health by developing a model based on function x area x probability to equal Net Ecosystem Improvement (NEI). The ultimate goal of this project is to build a model that will provide the ability to report and document ecosystem impacts resulting from MRC projects. As an example, the model was applied to the eelgrass no anchor zone to quantify the impact of the project. The Commission discussed the equations usefulness in other MRC projects.

- **Action:** The topic will be forwarded to the Executive Committee to summarize next steps.

**Roundtable**
There was no roundtable discussion.

*The next Commission meeting will be from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM on September 29 over WebEx.*
Committee Members: Tom Cowan, Nan McKay, Terry Stevens, Paul Clampitt, Jamey Selleck, Ron Thom
Commission Staff/Support: Sasha Horst, Rich Childers, Nicole Jordan, Caroline Gibson, Lucas Hart

MRC grants update
Sasha is continuing to move forward with the MRC grants. She reported a delay with the Commission’s EPA award through the Puget Sound Partnership, which could affect the Commission staff and the MRC grants if not resolved quickly.

  ➢ Action: Commission staff will keep the Executive Committee updated. (Update: agreement received and currently routing at Ecology for signatures)

San Juan update
Rich, Tom and Caroline met with Kendra Smith, Environmental Resources Manager for San Juan County, to discuss areas where the Northwest Straits Commission and Foundation can provide support to the MRC.

  ➢ Action: Rich, Tom and Caroline will work on follow up and update the committee as needed.

MRC Conference planning update
Rich said the MRC Conference planning committee recently met and a draft agenda is now available. Session leaders are working on session details. Nicole is working on conference logistics.

Ecosystem health–next steps
Ron updated on follow up from the recent presentation on ecosystem health at the August Commission meeting. He suggested meeting with the MRCs individually to discuss their interest in the topic. Then he suggested forming a team and charging them with developing conceptual models, defining measurable components and analyzing and organizing results.

  ➢ Action: Ron Thom, Tom Mumford, Lucas and Rich will work together to construct a timeline on next steps and share with Executive Committee at the October meeting.

Committee meeting dates through February
The committee agreed to move the Executive Committee meetings to the first Monday of each month from 11:00 AM to 12:00 PM.

News and updates from NWSC Director
Rich said Cecilia Gobin has been approved by the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission to serve as a tribal representative to the Northwest Straits Commission. A letter confirming that is pending.

*The next Executive Committee meeting will be on October 2 from 11:00 AM-12:00 PM over conference call*
MRC Monthly Report

County: Clallam

Month/Year: September 2017

Submitted by: Cathy Lear and Helle Andersen

Membership/Leadership Changes (including new members, departing members, changes to chair/vice-chair, NWSC representative/alternate, staff): None

Events/Meetings (including upcoming events/meetings and/or information on meetings/events from past month such as number of participants or highlights):

MRC Meeting: The monthly Clallam MRC meeting was held September 18th at the Commissioners large conference room.

LIO/ERN Meeting: Cathy Lear participated in the quarterly LIO/ERN meeting September 15th.

Funding Updates: (newly-awarded grants, in-kind support or other funding commitments): None

Project Updates:

Crabber Outreach: Shannon Weaver and Joshua Davis completed the crabber outreach in early September when the crab season closed. Shannon is currently writing a summary report over the educational outreach to crabbers. The report will be submitted to both the NWSF (who funded her position) and the NWSC as part of the general educational outreach deliverable.

Forage Fish Surveys: The September forage fish sampling was conducted September 5th at Ediz Hook and Lower Elwha Beach and September 6th at Pitship and Old Town.

Pigeon Guillemot Surveys: The pigeon guillemot project was concluded in September. Twenty-five volunteers were involved in the weekly surveys of 10 pigeon guillemot breeding colonies between June and September. The total number of volunteer hours was 447.5.

Shellfish Sampling at Pillar Point: Clallam MRC continues to do the bimonthly sampling at Pillar Point in September which is expected to be the last month of sampling.

Olympia Oyster Restoration: Two test plots was established at the Cline Spit site after the Clallam MRC approved of the effort. Clallam MRC submitted the Special Use permit to the USF&WS. The permit is for establishing two test plots at the Dawley Road property.

Eelgrass Survey: In late August Jeff Ward and Albert Foster conducted three eelgrass surveys in Port Angeles harbor: at the Rayonier site, Hollywood Beach and along the harbor-side of Ediz Hook.
MRC Monthly Report

County: Island
Month/Year: September 2017
Submitted by: Anna Toledo

Membership/Leadership changes (including new members, departing members, changes to chair/vice-chair, NWSC representative/alternate, staff): None.

Events/Meetings (including upcoming events/meetings and/or information on meetings/events from past month such as number of participants or highlights):

Meetings
- On September 5, Lisa Kaufman provided an update on the SHARP program and existing and planned restoration projects.
- A retreat is planned for mid-November to evaluate existing projects and develop project ideas for the next workplan.
- Anna presented to Sound Water Stewards on Camano about the MRC and our work.

Events
- The MRC will participate in Island County Children’s Day Festival on September 23rd with a “Forage Fish Toss” booth, borrowed from Skagit MRC.

Funding updates (newly-awarded grants, in-kind support or other funding commitments): None.

Project Updates (progress from past month on existing project or any new projects identified):

Forage Fish: Surf smelt eggs were found at Cornet Bay at Station 4, which is within the restored area! This is the first documented evidence of forage fish spawning within the restoration zone at Cornet Bay. Station 4 is in the area where spawning habitat was restored in 2012, demonstrating the importance of long-term monitoring.

Kelp: Kelp surveys are wrapping up. Gregg Ridder completed aerial photography of kelp beds. Data and photos are being reviewed and analyzed.

Seining: The report analyzing the eight years of pre and post restoration data at Cornet Bay has been completed.

Pigeon Guillemot: Pigeon guillemot surveys have been completed. A presentation is scheduled for the October 3rd MRC meeting.

Outreach: Signage has been developed to be displayed on sandwich boards during MRC monitoring projects. These boards will allow the public to learn about the MRC and its projects without disturbing volunteers in the process of conducting a survey.

Other (anything not covered above, including local issues of interest to the regional group, questions to the Commission, etc): None.

Photos (share a few photos of recent projects—include project, photo credit and additional info):
Membership/Leadership Changes (including new members, departing members, changes to chair/vice-chair, NWSC representative/alternate, staff):
No changes.

Events/Meetings (including upcoming events/meetings and/or information on meetings/events from past month such as number of participants or highlights):

Past Meetings & Events:
- September 5, 2017 MRC meeting, with 16 members/staff and 9 guests attending. Jeff Taylor organized a very informative program about NOAA tidal monitoring, citizen-science, and storm surge projects.
- Executive Committee met on Sept 13 (Dale, Ashley, Jeff, Wade and Cheryl)
- See Education-Outreach for more about Wooden Boat Festival, below.
- See Rain Gardens below for more about September installations.

Upcoming Meetings/Events:
- October 3, 2017 is next MRC meeting, with guest speaker Amy Carey talking about Sound Action, a Puget Sound watchdog group working to protect vital nearshore habitat and species, including forage fish. They support informed science and strong environmental policy.
- Dale Moses will be attending the NWSC Web-Ex Sept meeting.

Funding updates (newly-awarded grants, in-kind support or other funding commitments):
No new info.

Project Updates (progress from past month on existing projects or any new projects identified):
1. Monitoring: a) Fort Townsend Restoration: Volunteers have completed FT visitor surveys and results are being compiled. Verbal communication with the PNPTC forage fish lab technician indicates that at least 3 samples from winter 2016-17 contained surf smelt eggs. A compiled report will be delivered soon. b) Forage Fish Index Site (Adelma Beach): Monthly monitoring for forage fish continues. c) Kelp: North Beach monitoring took place on Sept 4, with 3 volunteers (Judy D’Amore, Jeff Taylor & Emily Bishop) participating.

2. Rain Gardens: Two rain gardens were installed during the week of September 19-22. Community volunteers joined a WSU Extension crew, MRC members and local students to install one rain garden at Port Hadlock and another at Chetzemoka Park in Port Townsend. City of Port Townsend Parks Department provided all the site work for the latter. The Port Hadlock installation is associated with First Security Bank, who was thrilled to host this installation to treat stormwater from their parking lot before it flowed into South Port Townsend Bay. More details will be included in the final report. See photos below. Installation of these two new MRC co-sponsored rain gardens will be featured in a WSU Extension film about how to build a rain garden. WSU film crews documented every step of both site installations.
3. **Education & Outreach:**
   a. The MRC participated in the 2017 Wooden Boat Festival Sept 8-10, with an estimated 300 people stopping at the MRC booth. More importantly, we worked with 10 partners on a ‘Passport to Adventure’ scavenger hunt that encouraged people to visit all the environmental booths. This activity was promoted in the Festival Program. We distributed 250-300 passports over the 3 days, and feedback from our partners was very favorable.

   “We felt it was a very worthwhile activity and it brought a level of interest to the booth that we had not seen in the previous 10 years we’ve exhibited live animals at the WBF.”

   “I have a first grader in Grant Street and I heard buzz about the passport from kids and parents even before the festival started. This was backed up with increased numbers of families with students walking ALL the way through our booth, asking questions and looking for the stamp. We are normally tucked a little out of view so I noticed a definite uptick in the number of people who walked deeper into our exhibit.” --WDFW and WA Dept of Health staff. Note: Their estimates for visitor participation was much higher--1,122 visitors over the 3 days.

   b. Jefferson MRC staff participated in the Jefferson County Environmental Health/PIC program Discovery Bay open house about water quality programs. Cheryl talked about the MRC’s work in general, projects in Discovery Bay and the NW Straits Foundation’s Shoreline Landowner Program. More than 20 people attended this event.

4. **Olympia Oyster:**
   (1) **Discovery Bay:** Lab work following collection of the shell strings placed in Discovery Bay is now underway. (2) **Quilcene Bay:** Lab work following collection of the shell strings placed in Quilcene Bay is now underway.

5. **Voluntary No Anchor Zones:**
   a. MRC completed photo-documentation of boater compliance during Wooden Boat Festival and all boats were in compliance at time pictures were taken.
   b. Dale Moses, the MRC buoy Project Lead, worked with Marine Surveys & Assessments on Sept 26 to re-install the three Port Hadlock marker buoys that had become detached from their anchor lines earlier in the year.
   c. Cheryl Lowe represented the MRC at a South Port Townsend Bay stakeholders meeting convened by WA Dept of Health to talk about strategies for keeping the area open for local shellfish harvest activities (prompted by a few live-aboard boats that had been anchored nearby.) Stakeholders included DNR, county Public Health and Planning Depts, local shellfish growers and the MRC.

**Other** (anything not covered above, including local issues of interest to the regional group, questions to the Commission, etc.):

Jefferson MRC continues to provide updated reports to the Puget Sound Partnership on their three 2016 NTA projects (in 2 LIOs).

See photos, next page.
New Rain Garden being installed at Port Hadlock, with film crew documenting each step.

Wooden Boat Festival—finding what lives in the eelgrass...
Membership/Leadership changes. MRC member, Tom Temple passed away. Therefore the MRC has six vacant positions. Currently, there are nine filled positions, which is the minimum number required by Resolution. The membership subcommittee has generated a list of potential new members and is focused on recruitment, matching the County’s Ordinance for representation of specific groups and expertise. By ordinance the MRC can operate with nine to fifteen members. The subcommittee is discussing the number of members to be most effective.

Events/Meetings. The September MRC meeting provided time to remember MRC Member Tom Temple, who passed away in late August. The agenda focused on approval of the Near Term Action proposal for feasibility of an Emergency Response Towing Vessel (ERTV) and analysis of environmental and economic impact of a large oil spill in or near San Juan County. It also covered the plans for the upcoming workshop: Actions to Protect Southern Resident Killers Whales from Extinction.

Funding updates. The MRC’s Near Term Action proposal has been selected by the San Juan County Local Integrating Organization. The project funded up to $100,000 will address three topics identified in the Marine Stewardship Plan and other regional studies. 1. The options and feasibility of having an Emergency Response Towing Vessel (ERTV) stationed near Boundary Pass and Haro Straits. 2. The long term and short term economic impact to San Juan County of a large oil spill in or near San Juan County. 3. The long term and short term environmental impact (impact to natural capital) of a large oil spill in or near San Juan County. The Marine Managers Workshop in April of 2017 served as one of the goals in setting the stage of this NTA.

Project Updates Orcas Landing Experience – The plan will be to plant native species natural to the rocky bald coastal shoreline with exhibits describe their niches and role in shoreline ecology. The MRC is planning its first two exhibit panels that will be funded through the San Juan County lodging tax fund and the NWSC Ecology grant. The Public Works Department is working on deck modifications and specifications for an ADA ramp to the site. The public opening is set for May 1, 2017.

Facebook Campaign – The Facebook campaign will be completing its interviews with marine experts, encourage viewer contributions and promoting the importance of the Marine Stewardship Area.

Other San Juan County Council has given direction to the MRC to help come up with local actions that can be taken to protect the Southern Resident Killer Whales while retaining the economic vitality of the whale watching industry that is a significant contributor to the County. The MRC SRKW subcommittee met to plan for three meetings in late October to address issues of vessel traffic and noise, prey availability, and pollution. This program will be one of the Tasks in the upcoming NWSC grant.
MRC Monthly Report

County: Skagit
Month/Year: September, 2017
Submitted by: Jamey Selleck/Tracy Alker

Membership/Leadership changes (including new members, departing members, changes to chair/vice-chair, NWSC representative/alternate, staff): No updates.

Events/Meetings (including upcoming events/meetings and/or information on meetings/events from past month such as number of participants or highlights):

- **MRC Meeting Highlights— September 14:** Ginny Broadhurst, Director of the Salish Sea Studies Institute at Western Washington University, presented on their new program.
- **Shoreline Landowner Workshop— September 23:** The Northwest Straits Foundation and the Skagit MRC hosted a workshop for Skagit County marine shoreline landowners on September 23, at the Fidalgo Bay Resort Convention Center, in Anacortes.

Funding updates (newly-awarded grants, in-kind support or other funding commitments): No updates

Project Updates (progress from past month on existing project or any new projects identified):

- **Bowman Bay Nearshore Restoration:** A planting/maintenance party, beach seining, and forage fish survey occurred on September 12th. Although it was advertised as being one of the Skagit Water Weeks events, just a small handful of folks from the public showed up. Surf smelt eggs were found at Bowman Bay for the first time since conducting the surveys three or four years ago. It just goes to show how important long-term monitoring is. The shoreline plantings seem to be doing well, but some maintenance is still needed. The dune grass is really starting to get well established. Some of the plants that were originally thought to be dead actually have some new growth. The public is really starting to take notice of the restoration work and seem pleased with the results.

- **Tide Pool Interpretive Sign:** The sign has been installed. A dedicated group of eight Salish Sea Stewards developed a survey for beach visitors to evaluate the effectiveness of the sign. 17 surveys have been completed. We’ve received a lot of positive feedback.

- **Salish Sea Stewards:** 35 volunteers from the class of 2017 Salish Sea Stewards contributed 1,235 volunteer hours during the first 6 months. 25 people are now on the wait list for next year’s training. Our first planning committee meeting occurred in early September. We will meet again in October.

- **Olympia Oyster Restoration:** We just finished up the 15th season of native oyster restoration work in Fidalgo Bay. There was a moderate recruitment of native oysters this year, compared to the previous two years which had a very high recruitment of native oysters. There are now approximately 4 to 5 million native oysters living in Fidalgo Bay. Paul is working with the WA Department of Fish and Wildlife to distribute and monitor stacks of ceramic tiles at four locations in Fidalgo Bay to monitor native oyster settlement. Data is collected from two of the ceramic tile stacks at two week intervals. Preliminary results indicate light to moderate settlement. The oyster shell bag in the lower channel of the newly restored marsh at Cypress Island had excellent survival and excellent growth rates of native oysters. Results from the data sensors that were placed in the channels at Cypress Island to monitor temperature and salinity will be compiled into a report soon. Paul relocated the data sensors to the channels near Sharpe’s Corner in Fidalgo Bay where a volunteer recently discovered a healthy population of Olympia oysters.

- **Pinto Abalone Restoration:** The report is being finalized.

- **Forage Fish Index Site Surveys:** Monthly surveys continue at Skagit MRC’s three Forage Fish Index sites: Ship Harbor, Similk Bay on the Swinomish Reservation, and Samish Island. Forage
fish eggs were found at the Ship Harbor site for the first time ever after sampling there for over a year! The samples will be sent to the WA Department of Fish and Wildlife for analysis and confirmation.

- **Kayak Kelp Surveys:** We are finishing up with the kelp surveys for the season. The three survey sites in Skagit County include: Coffin Rock, Shannon Point Marine Center, and Biz Point. This year we have 15 volunteers helping with the kelp surveys compared to last year when we had only two! Kimberly Cauvel from the Skagit Valley Herald is writing a story on the kelp recovery project. She will be meeting the volunteers at the Bowman Bay survey site this weekend.
  Samantha would like to try to re-launch the kelp survey 123 app again for volunteers to record where the different kelp beds are located in Skagit County to help identify potential new kelp beds to survey. All of the bugs have been worked out with the app, so it should go more smoothly with the next launch. The nice thing about this app is that anyone with a smart phone can help with this kelp recovery effort without even getting wet. It’s also a great way to increase the visibility of the MRC and get more volunteers involved in our work. There will be more discussion about the 123 survey app at the MRC conference.

- **Weaverling Spit Beach Nourishment/ Restoration:** Construction is now complete!
MRC Monthly Report

County: Snohomish
Month/Year: September 2017
Submitted by: Elisa Dawson

Membership/Leadership changes (including new members, departing members, changes to chair/vice-chair, NWSC representative/alternate, staff):

The Marine Resource Committee (MRC) had an intern from June – September 18. September 18 was intern Tim Keal’s last day, and he gave a presentation of his work with the MRC. Kathleen Pozarycki has extended her maternity leave. Her original return date was September 5. She is now planning to return in November. For the month of September, The MRC will receive approximately 5 hours per week from SWM Planner Bob Bernhard. However, SWM is trying to figure out if there will be any additional staff time available for the MRC from October 1 and Kathleen’s return.

Events/Meetings (including upcoming events/meetings and/or information on meetings/events from past month such as number of participants or highlights):

Tom Doerge attended the August 26th Northwest Straits Commission meeting as an alternate for Paul Clampitt. The meeting was held at the Pacific Rim Institute in Island County. The NWSC Committees gave reports, and there was a presentation on Education and Outreach in Island County. Other topics included a Puget Sound Partnership update, and a Northwest Straits Foundation update. Dr. Ron Thom and Dr. Tom Mumford have a presentation on defining Ecosystem Health.

Elisa Dawson attended the Snohomish-Stillaguamish Local Integrating Organization (LIO) met on July 27th. The LIO has $100,000 to allocate to NTA(s) by the end of September 2017. The Executive Committee has prioritized using this money for a non-capital project. There was confusion on whether or not the Snohomish MRC NTA for Snohomish Estuary Cleanup was considered capital or non-capital. At an additional special meeting, attended by Elisa Dawson and Franchesca Perez, on August 16th, the LIO decided to keep the Snohomish Estuary Cleanup to be considered for funding. The final decision on project funding was decided on August 24th, and Elisa Dawson attended the meeting for Paul Clampitt, who was out of town. The MRC did not receive any funding. The LIO decided by vote to fund the Latino Stormwater Outreach Program by WSU with the entire $100,000.

August 28 Meadowdale Site Visit Snohomish County Parks hosted a Meadowdale 30% design meeting for permit agency representatives on August 28. The meeting included permit agency representatives from Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and Washington Department of Ecology. Logan Daniels, Principal Engineer for Snohomish County Parks sought feedback from the permit agency representatives on how best to permit the project. All participants got to share their comments on the proposed design and permitting process.

Elisa Dawson and MRC Co-Chair Sarah Brown attended the Snohomish County Boards and Commissions Appreciate Event on August 28 at the Evergreen State Fairgrounds. The Boards and Commissions members were greeted by Snohomish County Executive Dave Somers, thanked for their service, and were provided a catered dinner.

The MRC held a follow-up workshop for the Storm Surge Grant on September 14 at Kayak Point Regional Park Group Picnic Shelter from 4PM-5:30PM. The goal of the workshop was to review the 2016-2017 storm surge data which was collected, give an update of the current status of the project, and to continue to engage citizens in data collection moving forward. The data
collected over the last year was done in Partnership with the United States Geological Service (USGS) and will contribute to Regional Wave Modeling across Puget Sound, the Straits of Juan de Fuca and Whidbey Basin. The workshop also covered shoreline property protection methods and provide opportunities for next steps property owners. Fourteen residents attended the workshop on September 14. Two residents had attended the workshop in the fall on 2016, 12 residents were new to the project. See MRC Grant deliverable 2.5 “Summary report on community meeting to share results” for more information.

Elisa Dawson and Tom Doerge conducted reconnaissance at Port of Everett for WDFW on September 18. Elisa and Tom went to the 10th street boat launch and Boxcar Park to find potential placement sites for mussel watch stations. Tom and Elisa found a workable site at the
10th street boat launch and reported the information to WDFW. The MRC will choose a time November 5-9 to deploy cages.

The Snohomish MRC had their monthly meeting on September 20th. In attendance were MRC members Paul Clampitt, Tom Doerge, Michael Ehlebracht, Debbie Hopkins, Traci Sanderson, Susan Tarpley, Craig Wollam (by phone), Ryan Williams from the Snohomish Conservation District, and MRC staff Elisa Dawson and SWM Planner Bob Bernhard. The MRC discussed the results of kelp mapping, which has shown a decline in kelp beds and acreage since 2015. Next discussed was the Storm Surge grant and September workshop. MRC plans to install another multiparameter monitoring device that will have a conductivity probe, to be deployed at Kayak Point Regional Park and the older monitoring device (without a conductivity probe) will be deployed at a site to be determined. The MRC gave subcommittee reports. The Ocean Literacy grant is taking next steps to coordinate the screening of three movies. Two locations will be selected to screen three movies. The potential locations include U of W at Bothell, Everett Community College, Everett Performing Arts Center, the Edmonds Theater (415 Main St) and Edmonds Community College. The screenings will take place between January and May of 2018. The Oil Spill Response Plan is still in the review phase with Snohomish County. The MRC has been allowed to preview the hazardous materials spill plan. The City of Stanwood will be participating in an oil train spill drill on October 18th. The Mussel Watch project was discussed. Two locations will have a cage deployed, 10th street marina and Brackett’s Landing. Deployment is tentatively scheduled for the evening of Sunday, November 5th. The next round of forage fish sampling is scheduled for October 18th. Paul Clampitt volunteered to assist at Howarth Park and Tom Doerge volunteered for the boat run. Upon discussing the contract drafted with DNR to remove derelict vessels, it was determined by the County’s PA that a contract is not needed after all. The DNR will be contacted to see if they require a contract, if not the document may be used as a scope of work. A letter showing support for the Snohomish Conservation District, and not specifically the proposed rate increase, was reviewed. There is a public hearing scheduled on October 18th with the County Council to review Snohomish Conservations District’s proposed rate increase. The meeting concluded with announcements. The Northwest Straits Commission has received funding for another year. While the LIO did not award the Snohomish MRC money to remove derelict vessels, the project was runner-up for project funding. The Snohomish MRC is requesting a meeting with SWM management to discuss the Business Plan and potential impacts it may have on the MRC. Finally, MRC members were reminded to attend a County Boards and Commissions Training in the near future.

**Funding updates** (newly-awarded grants, in-kind support or other funding commitments):

No updates at this time.

**Project Updates** (progress from past month on existing project or any new projects identified):

**Nearshore Beach Restoration Project:** No updates at this time.

**Nearshore Restoration Estuary and Salmon Recovery Program (ESRP) Learning Grant and Forage Fish Monitoring:** SWM staff continue to work with a team of researchers from the University of Washington on the ESRP grant. Elisa Dawson and MRC volunteers collected forage fish a forage fish sample from September 19th 2017. The index sample was processed using the blue vortex method and will be delivered to Lucas Hart who will get the sample to WDFW for lab processing. The next sample date will be October 18.

**Storm Surge Monitoring Project:** The Storm Surge workshop on September 14th had an attendance of 14 residents from the Port Susan area with 2 repeat attendees from the previous workshop. Dr. Eric Grossman demonstrated the USGS model for the attendees and spoke about the importance of citizens’ efforts to capture storm surge events with photographs. Lisa Kauffman spoke about armoring removal
and explained what she was able to provide as support (e.g., permit writing and site evaluations). Elisa Dawson reviewed the MyCoast app and showed the attendees the onsite multparameter monitoring device located at the Kayak Point Regional Park pier.

**Oil Spill Prevention, Preparedness and Response:** The Oil Spill Response Plan is still in the review phase with Snohomish County. The MRC has been allowed to preview the hazardous materials spill plan. The City of Stanwood will be participating in an oil train spill drill on October 18th.

**Snohomish Estuary Project:**
SWM staff Elisa Dawson and Zach Brown met with the Snohomish County PA and Contracts staff on Monday 9/18. The PA does not think an inter-agency agreement contract is needed for this project. After researching chapter 79.100 RCW on derelict vessels, which was mentioned several times in the agreement, the County’s rights and responsibilities regarding the removal of derelict vessels is fully contained within that chapter of statute. The statute specifies the County may recover up to 90% of the total reasonable and auditable costs of abandoned or derelict vessels. Indeed, the County’s rights and responsibilities are more fully articulated under chapter 79.100 RCW than they are under the proposed agreement. Further, as indicated by Lori, the County can utilize the Department of Enterprises Services (DES) Derelict Vessel Master agreement without entering into this agreement with DNR. The bottom line is that the County receives little benefit under the agreement. Next, SWM staff will discuss with DNR if a contract is needed from their perspective or if we can move forward with either a scope of work or MOU.

**Port Susan:** There will be a shoreline landowner’s workshop on October 14. Snohomish County and Camano Island residents wanting to learn how they can protect and maintain their shoreline property in Port Susan are invited to attend a free workshop at the Lake Goodwin Community Club in Stanwood on Saturday, October 14th. The event, hosted by the Northwest Straits Foundation and the Snohomish County Marine Resources Committee, will feature a presentation by Jim Johannessen, a coastal processes expert. Workshop topics include how to manage beach and bluff erosion, enhancing beach access, and using native vegetation for slope stability and habitat. Participants will also receive information on free site visits by a private, shoreline management professional to learn how to protect their property.

**Kelp Project:** Elisa Dawson, Lincoln Loehr, and Tom Doerge conducted Snohomish County MRC’s yearly kelp monitoring on August 7-9. The kelp team surveyed kelp locations at Meadowdale, Edmonds, and Mukilteo. Snohomish County SWM GIS has started using the data collected to add to maps created from previous surveys to monitor change over time. On August 24, Tom Doerge and Tim Keal joined Cathy Stanley in the Tulalip Tribes’ boat to do some initial reconnaissance for kelp near Hat Island in Snohomish County. SWM GIS completed the kelp maps which included maps of the 2017 data, as well as maps showing change over time from the 2015, 2016, and 2017 data. From 2015 to 2017 the total surface area decreased at all three sites. The total surface area of bull kelp at the Edmonds’ site decreased from 16.51 acres in 2015 to 7.43 acres in 2017, a loss of 55%. The total surface area of bull kelp at the Meadowdale site experienced a loss of approximately 84%, from 1.52 acres in 2015 to 0.25 acres in 2017. The greatest percent loss occurred at the Mukilteo site with a reduction of approximately 96%, 5.17 acres in 2015 to 0.18 acres in 2017. Possible reasons for the decrease in bull kelp production could be attributed to increased water temperatures. Continued annual monitoring will be beneficial to better understand factors impacting kelp beds. Additionally, in 2017 kelp beds were mapped at Hat Island, with a substantial aggregate of kelp located in the SE corner of the island (approximately 27 acres).
Membership/Leadership changes (including new members, departing members, changes to chair/vice-chair, NWSC representative/alternate, staff):

- Two new MRC members were appointed to the MRC on September 12. Ryan McLaughlin was appointed to a Conservation/Environmental interest. Ryan is an owner of a small business specializing in bioinformatics consulting and contracting services. He has extensive experience as a field scientist and also as a data scientist. He has worked as a scientific diver for over 7 years, most recently assisting in one of the largest eel grass restoration efforts to date with the Department of Natural Resources. Kristin Murray was appointed to a Citizen-at-Large interest. Kristin is a wetland scientist and fisheries biologist currently working for Hamer Environmental in Mt. Vernon. She has worked in the natural resource field for over 20 years and has a Master's of Science in Biology with an emphasis in botany and fisheries.

Events/Meetings (including upcoming events/meetings and/or information on meetings/events from past month such as number of participants or highlights):

- The MRC host Jennifer Lanksbury, WDFW, on September 7 at the monthly MRC meeting. Jennifer provided an overview of the regional Mussel Watch program and shared results from the 2015/16 study that the MRC participated in. WDFW will be conducting another round of mussel monitoring in the greater Puget Sound this coming winter of 2017/18. The MRC is currently look for funding support to “sponsor” a cage for this study.

- The MRC hosted a booth at Discover Birch Bay Days, September 2-3, at Birch Bay Beach Park. Approximately 150 people stopped by the MRC booth to visit.

- **Whatcom Water Week** occurred September 16-23. Water Week events (with MRC affiliation) included:
  - A film festival titled *Streams of Thought*. Films and special speakers include: *Ebb and Flow* with film producer Shelly Soloman and local oyster farmer Steve Seymour; *Sonic Sea* with Michael Jasny, NRDC and Rob Williams, Co-Founder, Oceans Initiative; *Paddle to Seattle* with Karl Kruger, SUP participant in the Race to Alaska, and *Beyond the Mirage*. Approximately 225 attended this festival.
  - The *Baker to Bay Symposium* occurred Sept 20-21, with an overarching goal/message to support and inform ecosystem recovery actions in Whatcom County in a manner that combines and coordinates data and research and community interests and needs. This symposium was considered part of the MRC/WWIN Speaker Series. 195 people registered for the event.
  - The MRC hosted two events during this time period: 1) in partnership with the Surfrider Foundation a beach cleanup took place on September 16 at Locust Beach as part of the International Coastal Cleanup - 13 people participated in this event, and; 2) Doug Stark led an event titled “Meet Your Underwater Neighbors” SCUBA divers with Bellingham's Gone Diving helped introduce the underwater residents of Post Point along with onshore naturalists of the Marine Life Center. Approximately 10 people participated.
  - The MRC will host a booth at *Bellingham SeaFeast*, the culminating event of Whatcom Water Week, on September 23.
• Eleanor Hines met with Dr. Brooke Love (WWU, Shannon Point Marine Center) who is teaching a marine conservation course this winter. Dr. Love is interested in involving her students in some MRC projects as they complete their capstone projects. This would help students to engage with marine conservation work and perhaps help the MRC with time/input/research from students. Another meeting is scheduled for the near future to narrow down ideas.

Funding updates (newly-awarded grants, in-kind support or other funding commitments):

N/A

Project Updates (progress from past month on existing project or any new projects identified):

• The MRC conducted a second bull kelp survey between BP and INTALCO at Cherry Point on September 4. The kelp looked older and was more spread out compared to the survey completed on August 8.

• Forage fish surveys were conducted at Marine Park and Little Squalicum estuary on September 10. The MRC is coming up to a full year of sampling so Eleanor has been checking in with Erin Dilworth on what our plan will be for the upcoming year. Do we continue sampling at the same locations? Are there other index sites?

• On September 29, Austin Rose, Elizabeth Kilanowski, and Burt Rubash will conduct a large woody debris, beach wrack survey, and forage fish survey at the Aiston Preserve.

• Monitoring still occurs on a bi-monthly basis in N. Chuckanut Bay. Austin will be developing a flyer to distribute to local paddling group to call for volunteer help with the marine sampling.

Other (anything not covered above, including local issues of interest to the regional group, questions to the Commission, etc):

• Chris Brown, Bob Cecile, Eleanor Hines, and other community volunteers continue to conduct monthly green crab surveys at Drayton Harbor, Post Point, and Chuckanut Bay.

Photos (share a few photos of recent projects—including project, photo credit and additional info):

Water Week made the front page of the Cascadia Weekly! Photo credit: Austin Rose

Water Week events highlighted in the Bellingham Herald! Photo credit: Doug Stark
Meeting Dates 2018

Unless otherwise noted or scheduled, WebEx meetings will be held from 10:00am-12:00pm
In-person meetings will be held from 10:00am-3:00pm

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<th>DATE</th>
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<td>February 15-16</td>
<td>Skagit</td>
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| March 30   | -       | WebEx conference call     |                            | Chair nominations
                                                        Confirm conference venue |
| April 27   | San Juan| Friday Harbor             |                            | Election of officers                                      |
| May 25     |         | WebEx conference call     |                            |                                                          |
| June 29    | Island  | (Tentative)               | MRC project presentations  | Approve MRC grant proposals, adopt NWSC budget and work plan |
| July 27    | -       | WebEx conference call     |                            |                                                          |
| August 31  | Whatcom | Ecology Field Office      |                            |                                                          |
| September 28 | -           | WebEx conference call     |                            |                                                          |
| October    | -       |                           |                            | No meeting                                               |
| November 2-3 | Jefferson | MRC Conference            |                            |                                                          |
| December 7 | -       |                           | WebEx conference call      |                                                          |
Commission staff highlights
September 2017

MRC Grants
The 2016-17 awards are closing at the end of September, and final deliverables should be submitted in the coming weeks if not already completed. The new MRC agreements for 2017-18 are routing through for final review and signatures, with a goal of starting on October 1.

Catch More Crab
Commission staff are wrapping up the recreational crabber outreach campaign in coordination with Foundation staff (Jason Morgan) and MRC volunteers. Commission staff are actively promoting the campaign through social media and gathering information for future campaigns. Of those who responded to the short online survey about the outreach campaign, nearly 70% reported that the campaign influenced them to change their crabbing actions. Using longer line and adding weight to pots were the two actions most frequently reported as changed due to the campaign information.

Kelp project update
A kelp monitoring project strategy meeting was organized on September 13. The goal of the meeting was to discuss how to move forward with our ever-expanding kelp monitoring project. The decision was made to continue the monitoring project and investigate ways in which the data we’re collecting can be used to influence management and policy decisions.

Forage Fish update
A conference call was held on August 29 between MRC volunteers and WDFW. The call was intended to allow MRC volunteers to ask questions about the ongoing forage fish Index Site Project and for WDFW to explain their forage fish program trajectory. WDFW continues to be dedicated to working with MRCs on their forage fish beach spawn monitoring project. They will begin working on a surf smelt model soon, which will identify data gaps. Those data gaps may shift WDFW efforts in new directions. For the time being, our work will remain the same. Lucas will stay in touch with WDFW to determine how MRCs can best assist WDFW in understanding forage fish ecology.

2017 MRC Conference
The annual MRC conference is scheduled to be held on November 3-4, 2017 at the Sheraton Four Points in Bellingham. The conference planning committee is finalizing sessions and speakers, and all MRC and Commission members should have received a registration email by now. Information is regularly updated on the web page at http://www.nwstraits.org/2017-mrc-conference.

Meeting attendance
Lucas attended the Jefferson MRC meeting on September 5, Rockfish Recovery Plan meeting on September 18, Strait ERN meeting on September 15, Puget Sound Partnership Leadership Council meeting on September 20.
Rich attended the Washington State Academy of Science Climate Change Symposium on September 14, Strait ERN meeting on Sept 15,