



Meeting: Northwest Straits Commission
Location: Zoom Virtual Meeting
Date: June 24, 2022
Time: 10:00 AM-12:00 PM

To join the Zoom meeting, [CLICK HERE](#) Meeting ID: 873 3389 3733 Passcode: 98273
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We acknowledge the lands we're on today are the ancestral and current homelands of Indigenous Nations who have stewarded them since time immemorial. We respect their sovereignty, support their Treaty rights, their right to self-determination, and we honor their sacred spiritual connection with the land and water. These Indigenous Nations include the Jamestown S'Klallam, Lower Elwha Klallam, Lummi, Makah, Nooksack, Port Gamble S'Klallam, Samish, Stillaguamish, Swinomish, and Tulalip Tribes.

10:00 – 10:10	Welcome and introductions Tribal acknowledgement Approval of May 2022 meeting minutes	Elsa Schwartz, Chair
10:10 – 10:25	Committee reports Executive Committee Science Advisory Committee External Relations Committee	Tom Cowan Julia Parrish Chris Castner
10:25 – 10:45	Business items <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome Nathan (Lucas)• Kelp Plan Project/Program Inventory Survey (Jeff)• Conference update (Lucas)• No anchor zone funding update (Dana)• Pew kelp project update (Dana)• Veterans Conservation Corps (Allie)• Forage Fish training schedule update (Leah)	Staff
10:45 – 11:05	Congressional Funding Update	Lucas/ Sasha
11:05 – 11:10	Puget Sound Partnership update	Jennifer Grimm, Puget Sound Partnership



11:10 – 11:15	NWS Foundation update	Don Hunger, NW Straits Foundation
1:15 – 11:45	MRC Reports	MRC Representatives
11:45 – 11:55	Meeting highlights and action items Identify key points and action items from this meeting for MRC reps to report back to their MRCs	All
11:55 – 12:00	Public comment	All

30 minute post-meeting open discussion – join if you'd like.



Minutes

May 27, 2022 • 10:00 AM-12:00 PM
Zoom – Virtual meeting
Northwest Straits Commission meeting

Attendees:

Commission Members: Elsa Schwartz (Island-Chair), Tom Cowan (Vice Chair), Jenn Grimm (Puget Sound Partnership alternate), Diane Hennebert (Skagit), Jeff Taylor (Jefferson), Bob Cecile (Whatcom), Julia Parrish, Tim Ellis (Snohomish), Christina Koons (San Juan), Chris Castner, Alan Clark (Clallam)

Commission Staff: Lucas Hart, Dana Oster, Leah Robison, Jeff Whitty

Others in Attendance: Troy McKelvey (Jefferson MRC), Jackie Lindsey (COASST), Phil Salditt (NW Straits Foundation)

Absent: Nan McKay, Laura Blackmore (Puget Sound Partnership), Cecilia Gobin (Tribal)

Welcome and Introductions

Chair Elsa Schwartz opened the meeting with introductions of attendees and the tribal acknowledgment. The Commission approved the minutes from the April 22 meeting as written by consensus.

Committee Reports

Executive Committee: Tom Cowan reported on the May 16 meeting of the committee, noting that the group focused on discussion of the budget for the Congressionally Directed Funds including approaches to address diversity, equity and inclusion, derelict vessels, and tribal projects.

Science Advisory Committee: Julia Parrish reported that the committee has spent time on extending invites to the *Speed Dating with Scientist* presentations for the next series of meetings.

External Relations Committee: Chris Castner noted that he doesn't have an update on the reauthorization bill. He has reached out to Senator Murray's staff to find out the current status of the draft bill. Lucas added that he talked to Padilla Bay Reserve Director Jude Apple, who was in Washington DC this week and noted that Senator Murray's staff mentioned the Northwest Straits Initiative reauthorization bill during his meeting with them.

Business items

In addition to the written update, staff provided the following business items:

- Staffing updates – Lucas reported that Nathan Woods will be joining us as Program Coordinator on June 6.
- Conference updates – Lucas shared the results of the one-question survey of MRC members about how comfortable they will be attending an in-person event. Following discussion, MRC representatives agreed to raise the discussion at their June meetings and report back to Commission staff. There was general support for an outdoor event in late summer.
- Congressional funding – Lucas informed the group that we are still waiting for NOAA to follow up with the process and guidance for the fiscal year 2022 federal funds and that staff will share more information when we receive it.
- Derelict vessel project opportunities – Commission staff recently held discussions with WA Dept of Natural Resources about derelict vessel removal and potentially a vessel turn in event. Lucas will reach out to MRCs to schedule a meeting on the program.
- Pew - Linking Kelp Science and Policy – Dana updated the group on a project funded by Pew. As part of the project, staff convened a workshop where more than 55 participants tuned in for a panel discussion around the existing rules and regulations that are in place to protect kelp, how they work in practice, and what information/resources are needed to inform decision-making.



Minutes

- Voluntary No-Anchor Zones – Dana reported that we are working with the NW Straits Foundation on permit applications and working with MRCs with local sites. The project team is also communicating with Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission for input from tribes.

Presenting Scientist – Jackie Lindsey

Julia Parrish introduced Jackie Lindsey of the Coastal Observation and Seabird Survey Team (COASST). Jackie shared information about the beached bird program that has been going on for 22 years, and the marine debris program that has been going on for the last 8 years. The COASST program has already engaged with MRCs in several counties and Jackie shared her contact information and encouraged MRCs to reach out if there is interest in learning more or partnering by adopting a beach for dead bird surveys.

Partner updates:

Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission: Cecilia Gobin was not in attendance.

Puget Sound Partnership: Jennifer Grimm updated the group on the Leadership Council considering adoption of final Action Agenda on June 8. Science Panel and ECB have recommended approval. Still trying to reschedule Puget Sound Day on the Hill and she will share information as soon as she has it.

Northwest Straits Foundation: Written report was provided in pre-meeting materials.

MRC Updates

MRCs provided full written reports that are available in the pre-meeting materials. Highlights are included below:

Clallam – Alan Clark

- Summer interns are being sought. Deadline was extended and they now have applications pending.
- Tumwater Trap was installed 4/28.
- Continued Forage Fish sampling on three beaches.
- Clallam MRC participated in Port Angeles' Earth Day Celebration (4/23) on the City Pier. The event was attended and good weather helped, and they may have successfully recruited volunteers to monitor pigeon guillemots.

Island – Elsa Schwartz

- Cornet Bay Stewardship – Weeding for Whales - Our restoration at Cornet Bay received some care on the 11th. We hosted a weeding and composting event. We will host another event on May 24 at 10 am to complete this work.
- Earth Day at the Clyde Theater - Island MRC and Sound Water Stewards partnered to host a showing of four of Florian Graner's amazing educational short films. Additionally, members of the MRC were able to host a Q&A session along with Florian to share about our program and how we have utilized Florian's amazing videos for school age education in Island County. 35 members of the public attended this fun event.
- Low Tide Walk - The Island MRC and Sound Water Stewards partnered to host a Low tide walk at one of Whidbey's beautiful beaches. 10 members of the public joined our team of beach naturalists to see what could be found at low tide. The highlight of the day was finding healthy adult *Pisaster ochraceus* sea stars!

Jefferson – Jeff Taylor

- Side scan sonar surveys took place May 16 & 17 covering a part of Port Townsend Bay (near the waterfront), as well as the Adelma Beach and Cape George (between the marina and Beckett Point) areas in Discovery Bay.
- Olympia oyster subcommittee conducted an initial population survey at its new restoration site, south of the powerlines in South Discovery Bay, with the help of 7 volunteers.



Minutes

- No-Anchor Zones team swapped the PT winter floats with summer spar buoys and did some maintenance work, bringing the number of functioning buoys up to 8 (of 13 permitted).

San Juan – Christina Koons

- Staff and MRC members presented at, and attended the Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference
- MRC members reviewed and attended site visits for this year's Salmon Recovery project proposals.
- The MRC welcomed Ciera McQuaid as the summer intern.

Skagit – Diane Hennebert

- Salish Sea Stewards Training ends May 24. 24 trainees are slated to graduate. A 'bring your own lunch' picnic is planned for July 16 at Padilla Bay where the newly graduated volunteers will get a chance to meet some of the veteran volunteers. The event will also include an educational component.
- Bowman Bay Plant Maintenance Work Party- May 18: Skagit MRC in partnership with the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group planted 10 Sitka spruce, 10 Douglas Fir and 20 Scouler's willow, plus dune grass at Bowman Bay. They also installed 12 watering bags to help the trees stay moist during the dry season. This event coincided with the forage fish surveys. Trained volunteers conducted a survival assessment the following day.

Snohomish – Tim Ellis

- Snohomish MRC is currently planning for a series of three Stakeholder Meetings for the Port Susan Conservation Action Plan (CAP) Update Project. These meetings will focus directly on topics identified as high priorities by partners, including a meeting to focus on plan implementation and a meeting to discuss the Objectives & Strategic Actions of the CAP, with focus on areas identified by partners in need of updating, such as climate change, invasive species, and human, social, and cultural wellbeing. An introductory meeting will be held on May 25 to present the project to the Snohomish-Stillaguamish LIO, Island LIO, and other interested partners.
- Snohomish County is currently working to finalize a contract for the removal of 4 vessels from the Snohomish Estuary, with the hope to start removing vessels in late May.

Whatcom – Bob Cecile

- The MRC has a vacancy for an Economic interest position and a Conservation/Environmental interest position. These vacancies are advertised on the MRC homepage <https://www.whatcomcountymrc.org/>

Meeting highlights and action steps for MRCs

The Commission identified the following key highlights, which staff will share as a separate document to MRC staff and the Commission:

- Action Item: MRC reps please ask your MRCs for insight on the following conference related matters and report general feedback to Sasha and Elsa. Given COVID:
 - How does the MRC feel about attending an in person indoor NW Straits Initiative conference in November?
 - How does the MRC feel about attending an outdoor NW Straits Initiative gathering in late summer/early fall instead of holding an in-person conference in November? The event would be more of an opportunity to connect than a conference.
- Lucas will be reaching out to MRC staff and other interested parties soon to schedule a meeting to discuss derelict vessels. In particular, we will discuss an opportunity to do a direct interagency agreement with DNR to remove vessels in MRC counties. Related to this, we will review the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Vessels of Concern list and the possibility of doing a pilot vessel turn-in event with DNR.
- The Puget Sound Partnership Leadership Council will vote on approval of the new Action Agenda in June



Minutes

Public comment

There was no public comment.

*The next Commission meeting will be on Friday June 24, 2022, via Zoom.

DRAFT



Executive Committee Meeting
June 13, 2022 • 11:00am-12:00pm
Notes

Attendees: Tom Cowan, Chris Castner, Jeff Taylor

Absent: Elsa Schwartz, Jude Apple, Julia Parrish

Staff present: Lucas Hart, Nathan Woods, Sasha Horst

Welcome Nathan Woods: Lucas introduced Nathan Woods to the group. Nathan is the new Program Coordinator for the Northwest Straits Commission.

Budgeting for congressional funds: The NOAA non-competitive grant is due June 17th. Sasha presented a brief budget for approval by the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee approved the tentative budget with the understanding that some numbers may change after additional information is collected from NOAA. The estimated timeline for congressional funds is as follows:

- June 17th: NW Straits Commission non-competitive grant application due
- August – September: NW Straits Commission staff develops work-plans/contract agreements with MRCs and partners
- Funding start date will be somewhere between October 1st, 2022 - January 1st, 2023, pending further guidance from NOAA
- Funds will need to be spent out within 12 months of the start date

The Committee discussed how to integrate diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) into the budget. Staff capacity could be limited to take action on consultant recommendations. Lucas explained that the communications position included in the budget will bring some added capacity, but confirmed that this may only be a one year position pending future funding. The committee recommended that DEI actions be targeted to specific MRC needs to maintain an actionable scope of work.

Science Advisory Committee Articles of Association: The Science Advisory Committee drafted articles that describe the purpose, structure and recruitment procedures for the Science Advisory Committee. The Committee recommended the articles to the Commission for approval.

Conference: Lucas provided a brief update on feedback from MRCs regarding holding an indoor conference versus an outdoor in-person gathering in late summer/early fall. Feedback from MRCs was highly variable and indicated some reluctance to gather indoors. Lucas recommended cancelling the in-

person November conference and instead, holding a one-day in-person outdoor event in August/September followed by virtual project program discussions in the winter. The Executive Committee agreed that this is acceptable. NWSC staff will begin planning for the event.

Partnering with the NWS Foundation: Lucas proposed a model for future program/project partnerships with the NWS Foundation where project partnership plans could be developed directly between the NWSC and NWSF after projects/programs are vetted. The process would include checking in with impacted MRCs. The partnership plans could include tasks and responsibilities of the two organizations, including funding commitments, which may help in implementing regional efforts. This is currently a concept. More conversations on this topic are expected in the future.

Other updates:

- Commission staff are awaiting answers from DNR regarding their ability to remove derelict vessels from private and tribal lands.
- Senator Murray's staff reached out to Lucas and confirmed they received the NWSC 2023 Congressional funding request. Senator Murray plans to prioritize the request. However, this is not a guaranteed source of funds. The Commerce, Justice, and Science Committee will make a final decision.

Purpose:

The Science Advisory Committee (SAC) advances the use of science in all forms (e.g., mainstream science, Indigenous science, citizen science) in all facets of the Northwest Straits Initiative. In this pursuit, the SAC serves both as an advocate for scientific approaches to the work of the Commission and the Marine Resources Committees (MRCs), and as a source of expertise and network into scientific communities of practice.

Specific tasks include, but are not limited to:

- Advisory role to the MRCs, providing advice on new and ongoing projects.
- Evaluative role to the NWSC staff, providing input on projects and proposals when asked.
- Advisory role to the Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) staff, assistance in defining and refining the MRC proposal process, including adaptive management of the RFP text and illustrative examples, project reporting structures, and evaluation processes.
- Advisory role to the NWSC Executive Committee, providing expert feedback on requests for endorsement and/or support for proposals to outside entities when asked.
- Assistance in defining and refining the Annual Conference, and specifically topics, speaker suggestions and other activities surrounding science, monitoring, science education, and resource management. Provision of training workshops attached to the Conference when applicable.
- Provision of expertise on specific topics, as requested by the NWSC Executive Committee; this could necessitate the creation of an ad hoc sub-committee.
- Work towards framing MRC projects at scales that have impacts larger than the individual project. For example, by connecting across MRCs to deliver regional impacts.

Membership:

The SAC will contain no less than seven (7) and no more than twelve (12) members at a time, including the Chair of the Committee.

Membership should include a diversity of scholarly areas, such as:

- natural science in marine systems, including both geoscience and living marine resources
- social science in marine systems
- natural resource management in marine systems
- science education in formal and/or informal contexts representation across the career spectrum:
- academia
- industry

- government, and specifically including tribal, state and federal representation
- non-profit and non-governmental organization and from across the arc of a career; for instance in academia:
- assistant professor
- full professor
- emeritus professor

All members will:

- be actively working on issues in, around and of the Salish Sea.
- be committed to facilitating equitable and active participation by members of the public in the monitoring, scientific inquiry about, and management of Salish Sea resources as specifically expressed locally at the county level, and through the Marine Resources Committee (MRC) process.
- actively pursue goals and habits that broaden representation in science, marine science, public involvement in science, and public involvement in the Northwest Straits Initiative in particular.

Recruitment:

All seated members are responsible for continuous recruitment of future Committee members. Additional recruitment will come from the Commission staff, the NWSC Executive Committee, and from all Commission members. Potential recruits and interested parties should be encouraged to contact the SAC Chair, or Marine Program Manager, for more information regarding duties and tasks of SAC membership. All interested individuals should seek nominations, including self-nominations, during the annual recruitment process in June; be willing to provide a short CV if asked; and be willing to engage in a conversation with the SAC.

The Committee will seek members with experience in and/or an interest in:

- the Northwest Straits region, and the Salish Sea and Pacific Northwest more broadly
- public engagement in science, monitoring and stewardship
- Scholarly qualifications in a relevant discipline

Appointments:

Members will be appointed to two (2) year terms, staggered for stability and consistency. Reappointment to additional terms is possible.

Appointments will be made following a recruitment and review process, and where seated members of the SAC (not up for reappointment) review all prospective recruits, and discuss the selection of a slate that collectively fulfills the broadest constitution of the Committee. The final recommended slate will be reviewed by the Chair, with input from the NWSC Director and Executive Committee, and with the possibility of alternate invitations (including fewer, or more) to meet specific inclusion goals unmet by the proffered slate. The final appointment will be made by the SAC Chair.

Chair:

The Chair will be a member of the Northwest Straits Commission, elected to fill the Science seat on the Commission.

Staff:

The Committee will be staffed by the Northwest Straits Commission Marine Program Manager.

Meetings:

Meetings will be approximately every other month for two (2) hours for the full Committee. Members may miss meetings, but more than half of the meetings missed will require a follow up from the Chair and Marine Program Manager to re-confirm interest and ability to participate. Meeting attendance expectation of individual committee members is four out of the six annual meetings. Continuation of two (2) or more missed meetings after follow up will result in removal from the SAC.

Sub-committees:

Members may elect to also serve on sub-committees. All sub-committees will be "ad hoc" - convened for a specific purpose and in pursuit of a particular product (e.g., a report for the Commission), and have a timeline of not more than one year.

Time Commitment:

Committee members are uncompensated. The estimated annual time commitment for SAC participation could include but is not limited to:

- Six (6) meetings for the full Committee (12 hours)
- Participation in the Annual Conference (16-20 hours)
- Participation ad-hoc committees if relevant to experience (~6 hours)
- Participation in in-person meeting if feasible (~8 hours)
- Meeting preparation and materials review/input (6-10 hours)

For a total annual time commitment of 50-56 hours

Northwest Straits Initiative - FY22 CDS Budget

	Notes	Budget	Additional Notes
Operations			
Commission operations	Travel, supplies, equipment	\$ 61,256	Travel (including conference and retreat), accessibility technology, regional project supplies, hybrid work tech needs, etc.
Staff			
Salaries	Ecosystem Project Coordinator, Ecosystem Project Coordinator, Ecosystem Project Assistant, Program Intern, Communications Consultant	\$ 221,779	Project staff not already covered by EPA funds, Communications consultant 4 and program intern are new.
Benefits	36.6%	\$ 81,171	Ecology mandated
Indirect	28.75%	\$ 87,098	Ecology federally-approved rate applied to salaries+benefits
Contracts			
Marine Resources Committees	Non-competitive subawards with counties (Clallam, Island, Jefferson, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, Whatcom)	\$ 976,936	Additional project support for MRCs is provided through DNR and the NWSF.
WA Dept of Natural Resources	Interagency agreement to support operations of derelict vessel removal project as prioritized by county MRCs and tribal partners.	\$ 1,133,645	Vessels to be prioritized by MRCs and tribal partners. \$300,000 was designated by specific MRCs.
NW Straits Foundation	Collaborative research to complete Shore Friendly, voluntary no-anchor zones, Clayton Beach, derelict crab pot removal, conference planning support	\$ 338,115	Pending NOAA approval.
No-anchor zone social marketing	Competitively bid contract to implement voluntary no-anchor zone social marketing campaign	\$ 35,000	Components that are not covered by US Fish and Wildlife Service funding. Complements NWSF tasks.
DEI assessment	Competitively bid contract to support MRC DEI needs	\$ 50,000	Scope to be determined to fulfill MRC needs. NWSC staff are currently consulting with MRCs to better understand their needs. The staff liaison to the DEI consultant would be the Communications Consultant we plan to hire on staff.
Strategic planning retreat	Competitively bid contract to conduct retreat facilitation	\$ 15,000	
TOTAL		\$ 3,000,000	



Commission staff highlights - [June 2022]

MRC Support

MRC Grants: All of the current MRC grant amendments have been executed to shift funding between state sources per the changes to the state budget. Thanks to MRC and county staff for ensuring the amendments were executed on schedule.

Regional Projects

Eelgrass: The NW Straits Commission was awarded funds from the US Fish and Wildlife Service to continue phase 2 of the Voluntary No-Anchor Zone project in 2023 and 2024. Work on phase 1 continues with site-specific meetings to coordinate the layout of proposed no-anchor zones as permitting gets underway.

Kelp Plan: The Kelp Plan Project/Program Inventory survey was emailed to nearly 400 Puget Sound kelp stakeholders on 6/15 to gather information on what kelp conservation or restoration project/programs organizations have and what Kelp Plan actions they align with. Information collected by this survey will be incorporated into a database that will be used to understand what progress has been made with the Kelp Plan actions and will also be used to support ongoing work to strengthen collaborations and implement the Kelp Plan.

Kelp Monitoring: Kelp kayak monitoring volunteers are in full swing with Skagit, Jefferson, and Island counties having already completed or scheduled their first survey for June. Other counties will begin surveying kelp in July and August when the kelp bed is at its peak extent.

Green Crab: We are very excited to welcome back Antonio Jones, a Veterans Conservation Corps (VCC) member who worked with us last year, to our group to help Leah with the green crab fight in Whatcom County. Additionally, the Washington Conservation Corps (WCC) continue their biweekly sampling of green crab in Samish and Padilla Bay, and as of 6/16 have captured 17 green crabs and found 3 green crab molts in Samish Bay, with nearly all captures and molts occurring off Pigeon Point in the eastern portion of the Bay. Staff are currently working on the interim progress report for WA Dept of Fish and Wildlife.

Forage Fish: Training is scheduled for July 13 in Port Townsend.

Operations

Staffing update: Nathan Woods started on June 6 as the Program Coordinator.

Funding update: Commission staff learned from NOAA that the funding opportunity was open for the final application for the FY22 Congressionally Directed Spending. The application had to be finalized

by Commission staff by June 17 to allow for a two-week Ecology review period before the due date of July 5. The final grant application for US Fish and Wildlife Service was also completed this month.

Meetings attended:

Lucas attended: San Juan MRC 6/2; tribal project partnership meeting 6/3; Ecology leadership meeting 6/9; DEI Summit 6/7, 6/14, 6/21; Derelict vessels planning meeting 6/10

Allie attended: Whatcom MRC meeting 6/2, Kelp Vital Sign Indicator Workshop #2 6/7, Skagit MRC meeting 6/9, DEI Summit 6/14

Sasha attended: San Juan MRC meeting 6/2; tribal project partnership meeting 6/3; NOAA grant funding meeting 6/9; Washington DEI Summit 6/7, 6/14, 6/21

Jeff attended: Kelp vital sign indicator meeting 6/6 and workshop #2 6/7, DEI Summit 6/7,14,21

Leah attended: DEI Summit 6/7 & 6/21, Green crab booth at What's the Point (Whatcom Event) 6/18

Dana attended: San Juan MRC meeting 6/2, Whatcom MRC meeting 6/2, Kelp vital sign indicator project team meeting 6/3 & 6/17, Kelp vital sign indicator workshop #2 6/7, Skagit MRC meeting 6/9

Nathan attended: MRC Derelict Vessels Meeting 6/10, MRC Executive Committee meeting 6/13, DEI Summit 6/14

Northwest Straits Foundation June 2022 Program Updates

Mission Statement - *To protect and restore the health of the marine ecosystem by promoting and implementing science-based restoration and stewardship, enhancing collaboration and attracting resources for the work of the Northwest Straits Initiative*



Catch More Crab:

- We are hosting a virtual crabber workshop on June 30th, from 6 – 7 PM in partnership with Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife. Attendees can expect to learn about the 2022 crabbing season, regulations, and tips on how to be a successful crabber. [Click here](#) or visit catchmorecrab.org to register for this free workshop.
- The Catch More Crab Facebook and Instagram ad campaign is being launched June 20th and will run until September 20th. The ads will feature a series of four videos informing viewers of proper crabbing techniques that they can follow to help them catch more crab and further prevent crab pot loss.
- Year one of our two-year derelict crab pot removal project in Anacortes is under way. Removals started in June and have received both regional and national press including the Skagit Valley Herald, Seattle Times, KIRO radio and NPR.

Shore Friendly:

- Environmental Technician, Haley Sherman, and Director of Programs, Lisa Kaufman, have been gathering outreach materials for the Shore Friendly program. We plan to send packets to all new shoreline homeowners from 2021-present. These packets will include information for homeowners on how to protect their homes from erosion using natural methods. The packets provide information on the Shore Friendly program and give homeowners a chance to apply for a site visit. This year the packets will also include Catch More Crab materials and a fact sheet about identifying European Green Crab.

Shore Friendly cont.

- The Shore Friendly program returned to in-person events in May with two workshops for shoreline landowners. The first, hosted by NWSF and Jefferson MRC on May 24th, was held in Port Hadlock for residents of Jefferson and Clallam counties. Participants learned about coastal processes, impacts of hard armor, natural solutions for erosion protection, drainage and vegetation management, and many other topics from Jessica Cote and Traci Sanderson of Blue Coast Engineering. The workshop was followed by a beach walk at East Beach County Park. The following day, we held a vegetation management workshop and beach walk in partnership with the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community's Shore Friendly Program and the Skagit MRC. Ben Alexander from Sound Native Plants focused on invasive vegetation and included techniques for removal and replacement with native trees and shrubs. The event started out with a walk along Snee Oosh Beach and included our videography team from Walking Distance who are assisting with production of the next Shore Friendly Living video on vegetation management.



Ben Alexander leads the beach walk at SneeOosh Beach walk and the classroom session at Thousand Trail Campground.

Advancement:

- Northwest Straits Foundation received a grant of \$8,500 from Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians. This funding will support our Shore Friendly program and help us with landowner education and outreach in Snohomish County.
- Nyla Kanda, a 5th grader at Alderwood Elementary, raised almost \$300 in her end of year project. She educated her peers on how to save our oceans. To learn more, be on the lookout for our newsletter. [Sign up here](#) to receive the monthly newsletter!

Monitoring:

- We've been having a lot of fun working with volunteers at the Cornet Bay beach seining. Juvenile pink and chum salmon numbers have been high and we caught our first cutthroat trout last week!
- Our monitoring season is in full swing with two sites already surveyed this month and another twenty sites to survey through September. This month's sites include: Similk Bay, Seahorse Siesta, Howarth Park, Bowman Bay, Maylor Point, and Polnell Point.



Howarth Park at an extreme low tide. Restoration was done in 2016.

Salish Sea Conservation Corps:

- The AmeriCorps planning grant team traveled to Albuquerque, NM for a 3-day conference hosted by Americas Service Commission and AmeriCorps. They came back energized and excited about the Salish Sea Conservation Corps. Workshops included: Techniques for Experiential Professional Development, Choosing Performance Measures, Practical Strategies for Promoting Inclusion and Advancing Racial Equity, Host Site 101, and many more.
- ServeWA, the organization who awarded Northwest Straits Foundation with the planning grant, hosted a Washington Environmental AmeriCorps meet-up over zoom. Connecting with well-developed programs such as Washington Conservation Corps, the Student Conservation Association, and EarthCorps provide the team with insight on running a Conservation Corps.



Passport to Marine Adventure:

The Northwest Straits Foundation is releasing our Passport to Marine Adventure travel game this month! It's fun and free for the whole family. As spring and summer calls us outdoors, our Passport provides an engaging way to explore the beautiful shores and bays of the Salish Sea.

It's simple: grab your family or friends; pick a site on our easy-to-use game app; and chart a course for adventure. Along your journey, you'll learn about marine wildlife, coastal habitat, and the Salish Sea. You'll see breathtaking vistas and be inspired by this unique place we call home.

There are currently three coastal exploration sites in each of the seven counties comprising the Northwest Straits region. The sites make great day trips or can be combined for a longer getaway. As you visit them, you'll also earn points to redeem at local businesses for discounts on food, merch, or hotel stays.

We hope you enjoy the journey, and learn about life, health, and stewardship of the Salish Sea.



MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Clallam

Month/Year: June 2022

Submitted by: Rebecca Mahan

Key items (two or three) for verbal report-out by MRC rep:

- Summer intern interviews 6/13.
- Tumwater Trap is fishing.
- Continued Forage Fish sampling on three beaches.
- Pigeon Guillemot surveys have started.

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

Events/Meetings (events/meetings from past month with any noteworthy highlights and information on upcoming events): Alan Clark gave a Kelp presentation to a class at Sequim High School 5/26.

June Clallam MRC meeting is June 27th 2022.

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

Project Updates (project activities and highlights from the past month, any new projects identified): Olympia oyster surveys have started in Sequim Bay with Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe
Forage Fish sampling is going well. Clallam MRC continued to collect the monthly samples at Cline Spit and Ediz Hook and Elwha beaches East and West. Pigeon Guillemot project is has started monitoring nests.

Shellfish Biotoxin monitoring: CMRC member Bob Vreeland and Coleman Byrnes volunteer are sampling Freshwater Bay and Pillar Point

Other (anything not covered above, including local issues of interest to the regional group, advisory actions the MRC is taking, questions to the Commission, etc.):

Photos (photos of recent projects or members—include project, photo credit and additional info):

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Island

Month/Year: June / 2022

Submitted by: Kelly Zupich

Key items (two or three) for verbal report-out by MRC rep:

- Cornet Bay Stewardship – Weeding for Whales
- Marine Debris/ Plastics Classes with the Swinomish
- Oak Harbor AP BIO Class – Marine Debris Survey

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

Events/Meetings (events/meetings from past month with any noteworthy highlights and information on upcoming events):

- May 19: Swinomish “Between two Worlds” Class
- May 24: Cornet Bay Stewardship 10:00-3:00
- May 25: Port Susan Introductory Stakeholder Meeting
- June 3: Oak Harbor Students Marine Debris Survey
- June 7: MRC Meeting 3:00 – 5:00
- June 10: Cornet Bay Stewardship 10:00-2:00

Upcoming Meetings/Events:

- June 25: Beach walk and nature journaling – Navy base
- June 30: Port Susan Conservation Action Plan - Strategic Actions Workshop 1:00
- July 5: MRC Meeting 3:00 – 5:00
- July 6: Port Susan Conservation Action Plan - Implementation Workshop 1:00
- July 8: Cornet Bay Stewardship 10:00-3:00

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

We turned in our proposed budgets for the Congressional Funding

Project Updates (project activities and highlights from the past month, any new projects identified):

Cornet Bay Stewardship: Our restoration at Cornet Bay received some additional care on May 24th and June 10th. There are a lot of weeds to remove. We will be holding another event on July 8th to start spreading 40 yards of hog fuel to help smother the weeds and provide a moisture barrier for the plants and trees. Our dedicated group of volunteers have helped to remove 5 truckloads of weeds so far! We have recently made a connection with the Navy and have been getting a few volunteers from the base at each of our events. We are very excited to have this new connection and look forward to our continued work together.

Monitoring – Forage Fish: Our work monitoring for Forage fish eggs continues at most of our sites year-round. Teams continue to monitor monthly at Hoypus Point, Cornet Bay, Sunlight Shores, Maple Grove,

Hidden Beach, Glendale. This month we checked out the Forage Fish sampling site at Hidden Beach to meet the volunteers and get to know their site.

Seining: The seining team is going strong and continuing monthly.

Outreach – Port Susan MSA: The Evans School of Public Policy and Governance students have finalized the report and have given their presentations to both Snohomish MRC and Island MRC. Both committees had a great round of discussions around the literature review and presentation. The initial stakeholder meeting was held on May 25th. More have been scheduled and we look forward to learning how we best get this information in the most beneficial format as possible.

Outreach-Swinomish “Between two Worlds”:

It was a good month for education! In collaboration with the Sound Water Stewards, the Marine Resources Committee was honored to assist in teaching a couple of classes for Swinomish youth called “Between Two Worlds.” This program helps students learn about science from a western and indigenous perspective. On the first day, MRC member Jill Lipoti taught the students why plastics and marine debris are such an issue for our fragile marine ecosystems. She also did an excellent job in giving the students tangible actions and steps that they can take in their daily lives to help with this widespread issue. On the second day, Sound Water Stewards and MRC staff had a great afternoon working with the students to make educational posters featuring messages about the problems with plastic in our environment.

Outreach-Oak Harbor AP BIO Class:

In the final weeks of the school year, we were pleased to get to work with the 12th grade AP Biology students from Oak Harbor to set up an initial marine debris survey site for Fort Casey State Park. This site will then be monitored by students in the future. This is in collaboration with WA State Parks, Sound Water Stewards and NOAA. The data will then be entered into a NOAA database to help them learn more about how and where marine debris shows up on our local shorelines. Getting to work with students is a highlight of the MRC work and we look forward to further work in this area.

Other (anything not covered above, including local issues of interest to the regional group, advisory actions the MRC is taking, questions to the Commission, etc.):

- Island MRC could use any help with how to incorporate D.E.I. into our activities and operations.
- We also are looking for any resources on how to measure the impact of our work.
- Resources on developing project budgets and proposals

Photos (photos of recent projects or members—include project, photo credit and additional info):



After Weeding and Composting at
Cornet Bay Restoration

photo by Kelly Zupich



White crowned sparrow nest at Cornet Bay Restoration

photo by Kelly Zupich



White crowned sparrow feeding babies at the Cornet Bay Restoration

photo by volunteer Lachlan Pope



Swinomish students making educational posters

photo by Kelly Zupich



Oak Harbor AP BIO Class starting their marine debris survey

photo by Kelly Zupich

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Jefferson

Month/Year: June 2022

Submitted by: Monica Montgomery

Key items (two or three) for verbal report-out by MRC rep:

- The MRC tabled its first in-person community event since the pandemic started, at Shrimpfest in Brinnon on May 28 and 29. We made 266 direct contacts over the weekend and had lots of positive interactions and public members (local and visiting) particularly interested in the green crab invasion (the first one in Hood Canal was detected just the week prior).
- The first ROV survey to locate and remove derelict crab pots from the Cape George and Adelma Beach areas of Discovery Bay was conducted on June 14. The team faced a number of challenges (strong currents, low visibility, fishing line and seaweed plugging up the ROV propellers, etc.) and was unable to locate pots. With some lessons learned and ideas for improving the ROV setup, the team will continue to pilot this effort.
- The MRC had an Olympia oyster workday on June 17, with 5 MRC members and 5 community volunteers helping to spread shell (16 half barrels) at the Lagoon Site.

Membership/Leadership changes (new/departing members, changes to chair/vice-chair, NWSC representative/alternate, staff): Nothing to report.

Events/Meetings (events/meetings from past month with any noteworthy highlights and information on upcoming events):

Past Events/Meetings

May 24 – Executive Committee meeting
May 25 – Kelp subcommittee meeting
May 26 – Olympia oyster meeting w/ partners: Kilisut Harbor plans
May 26 – Forage fish survey at Dabob
May 27 – NWSC monthly meeting
May 28-29 – Education & Outreach: tabled Shrimpfest in Brinnon
May 30 – Forage fish survey at Adelma
May 31 – Crabber outreach subcommittee meeting
June 7 – MRC monthly meeting
June 14 – ROV survey
June 14 – Olympia oyster population surveys at Kilisut Harbor
June 15 – Forage fish survey at Dabob
June 17 – Olympia oyster shell spread at the Lagoon Site

Upcoming Events/Meetings

June 21 – Executive Committee meeting
June 21 – Education & Outreach virtual speaker event: PNW Crab Research Group
June 22 – Education & Outreach coupled hands-on activity: light trap sampling
June 24 – First kelp survey

June 25 – Education & Outreach: tabling Forever Streamfest

June – Forage fish survey at Adelma

Funding updates (newly-awarded grants, in-kind support or other funding commitments): Nothing to report.

Project Updates (project activities and highlights from the past month, any new projects identified):

1. Monitoring:

- **Forage fish - Fort Townsend:** Nothing to report.
- **Forage fish - Adelma Beach (Index):** The Project Lead (Jeff) and one volunteer (Cindy) surveyed on May 30.
- **Forage fish - Dabob Bay (Index):** The MRC Coordinator, Project Lead (Sarah), one MRC member (Troy), and one community volunteer (Cheryl) surveyed on June 15.
- **Kelp:** The team is conducting its first survey of 2022 on June 24.

2. Rain Gardens:

- The rain garden subcommittee is planning another workday to address maintenance needs of established rain gardens, set for July 29.
- Bob (WSU Extension partner) is helping to plan the next rain garden to be installed before the end of September.

3. Education & Outreach:

- Four MRC members (Joanie, Sarah, Betsy, Solenne) and the MRC Coordinator tabled the community event, Shrimpfest, in Brinnon on May 28 and 29, making a total of 266 direct contacts. Folks were particularly interested in learning more about the invasive green crab issue. The MRC's next tabling event will be Forever Streamfest on June 25, possibly alongside some Clallam MRC members.
- The subcommittee is organizing another coupled presentation and in-person event in partnership with the Port Townsend Marine Science Center, scheduled for June 21 and 22. The virtual presentation will be focused on the PNW Crab Research Group's work studying Dungeness crab and management efforts (featuring Emily Buckner from PSRF, Katelyn Bosley from WDFW, and Liz Tobin from the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe) coupled with a live light trap monitoring activity at the marine science center the following morning.
- The Crabber Outreach subcommittee canceled its in-person workshop set for June 23, which would have featured MRC, NWSF, WDFW, and Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe speakers, due to county department covid policy and rising rates in Jefferson County. The subcommittee decided against transitioning to a virtual format, as it would duplicate other virtual events.

4. Olympia Oysters:

- The Project Lead (Neil) helped with Olympia oyster population surveys around Mystery Bay, alongside Puget Sound Restoration Fund and WDFW partners.
- The MRC had a workday on June 17 to spread 16 half barrels of shell from Taylor Shellfish at the Lagoon Site. The MRC Coordinator, five MRC members (Frank, Gordon, Joanie, Janette, Bryan) and five community volunteers (Sandy, Jeff, Angela, Steven, Susan) transferred barrels of shell from the truck, along the Olympic Discovery Trail, to the restoration site, and spread shell across the spit and lagoon at low tide.
- The subcommittee is planning for a population survey at the North (original) Powerlines Site on July 15.

5. Voluntary No-Anchor Zones:

- The Project Lead (Troy), two MRC members (Bryan, Gordon) and one community volunteer (Steve) went out on June 12 to service the remaining buoys along the Port Townsend waterfront. The team installed 3 more summer spar buoys, bringing the total to 11 functioning buoys (of the total 13 permitted). The team would like to add a 14th buoy between the ferry and Boat Haven, where eelgrass is currently not being protected and where boats anchor.
- Contract review by the county is underway for Marine Resources Consultants to conduct an underwater video tow survey for submerged aquatic vegetation (namely *Zostera marina*).

6. Mapping Lost Crab Pots:

- *Side Scan Sonar:* The consultant has processed the data, resulting in total numbers of what are likely to be derelict crab pots, with 92 pots between the Cape George marina and Beckett Point and 31 near Adelma Beach. The majority of the pots near Cape George are located deeper than 100ft and are unfortunately unable to be recovered. Using this data, the Sea Dragons team created clean maps showing the derelict crab pots, which will be shared with partner organizations and as part of local crabber education efforts.
- *ROV:* Using the ROV, the team surveyed Adelma Beach and Cape George areas on June 14. It is likely not possible to operate removal efforts at Cape George using the ROV as the currents proved to be too strong at this location. The team has focused its efforts on the Adelma Beach area, which is much more protected, calmer and shallower. No pots were detected using the ROV, even with the coordinates from the side scan sonar survey. However, one derelict pot happened to get hooked by the boat anchor and was removed upon pulling the anchor up. The team will attempt another survey to locate and remove pots the weekend of June 18-19.

Other (anything not covered above, including local issues of interest to the regional group, advisory actions the MRC is taking, questions to the Commission, etc.):

- The Shoreline Landowner Outreach subcommittee worked with NWSF to organize an in-person shore friendly workshop on May 24. The workshop was attended by ~27 Jefferson County residents and received highly positive verbal feedback.

Photos (photos of recent projects or members—include project, photo credit and additional info): See below.

May 28-29 Education & Outreach subcommittee tabled at Shrimpfest - photo of Joanie and Betsy:



Photo by Monica Montgomery – Joanie showing shells of various bivalves



Joanie, Joanie's Friend/Brinnon community member & Monica



Photo by Monica – Solenne & Sarah tabling



May 26 Forage fish survey at Dabob: Troy, Sarah, Anne, Janette – Photos by Monica





June 14 ROV survey: Logan handling the ROV cable and tether for hooking lost pots – Photos by Monica



June 14 ROV survey: Nathaniel and Ella searching for lost pots and operating the ROV from the cabin – Photos by Monica



June 14 ROV survey: Logan, Riley, Nathaniel and Ella with the anchor-caught pot – Photos by Monica



June 17 Olympia oyster workday: Gordon and Frank ready to load up wheelbarrows – Photos by Monica



June 17 Olympia oyster workday: Frank and Steven emptying wheelbarrows – Photos by Monica



June 17 Olympia oyster workday: Janette spreading shell – Photos by Monica



June 17 Olympia oyster workday: Joanie and Susan spreading shell – Photos by Monica



MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: San Juan County

Month/Year: June 2022

Submitted by: Frances Robertson

Key items (two or three) for verbal report-out by MRC rep:

- Vessel monitoring efforts at eelgrass protection sites around the county began for the season.
- MRC staff and an MRC member began visitor assessments at False Bay, they are trying to recruit more members to help with this effort.
- County staffing of the MRC is undergoing restructuring to make better use of staff time and skill sets.

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

There have been no changes to membership this month. There are changes occurring to how the San Juan MRC is being staffed but these will be shared in more detail in the July report once the new county staff member is onboarded.

Events/Meetings (events/meetings from past month with any noteworthy highlights and information on upcoming events):

- Joint MRC-LIO meeting June 2nd.
- Stewardship meeting June 1st (Lead Staff, Frances Robertson)
- Terrestrial Managers Group May 26th (Lead Staff, Frances Robertson)
- Department of Ecology Webinar on Tug Escort modelling efforts. May 8th
- Plastic Free Salish Sea subcommittee meeting

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

The MRC approved the use of the federal CDS funds to remove the 117 derelict creosote piles at Jackson Beach.

Project Updates (project activities and highlights from the past month, any new projects identified):

MRC staff and volunteers have begun to collect vessel monitoring data and also False Bay visitor data.

- The QAPP for False Bay sampling was approved and sampling has begun.
- The Sea has been installed at the Port of Friday Harbor.

The core effort of MRC staff and subcommittee continues to be progressing the MSA Plan update. The MSA Plan subcommittee are working on a comprehensive spreadsheet outlining the strategic actions, how they overlap with the local Salmon Recovery Chapter Update and the Ecosystem Protection and Recovery Plan, the key objective criteria, key threats that the actions address, the key results expected, if and what the measures are for each action, and the general justification for each action. The group continues to work towards having these ready for the MRC to review at the July meeting. Though this may have to be pushed off to the August meeting due to the MRC providing review and scoring of the local salmon recovery grants at the July meeting. Progress has also been slowed as the lead staff has been forced to undertake outreach efforts that would normally be undertaken by MRC members.

Both *Ulva spp.* Surveys and visitor outreach began at False Bay in June. Most visitor outreach effort has focused on the weekends during the low tide period. So far visitor numbers are much lower than 2020 when outreach was last undertaken at the bay.

Summer outreach for Plastic Free Salish Sea is being planned with PFSS partners and the SeaBin has been installed at the port (installed during the third week of June) and monitoring will take place daily through the summer.

MRC members on each of the main islands are once again undertaken vessel surveys at anchor out sites and eelgrass restoration sites. This year data collection is aided by an online data collection form created for the NWSC and MRCs.

Other (anything not covered above, including local issues of interest to the regional group, advisory actions the MRC is taking, questions to the Commission, etc.): Staff presented the SRKW westside study to the tribes and federal and state agencies on June 14th. Further presentations are scheduled for the 23rd and final comments are expected to be submitted for inclusion in the report by the end of the month.

MRC lead staff had an opportunity to fly around the county with Watcom MRC member Mike McKay to help with beginning to plan for the possibility of aerial vessel surveys later in the season and over 2023.

Photos (photos of recent projects or members—include project, photo credit and additional info):



MRC member Beth Tate talking with a fellow visitor at False Bay



New Be Whale Wise and Whale Warning Flag signage at Roche Harbor.



Eagles Cove, Westside San Juan Island.



Lime Kiln, westside San Juan Island.



Spiden, Flattop, Waldron, Patos, Suicia, Orcas, and San Juan Islands.



Boats at anchor in Blind Bay, Shaw Island.

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Skagit

Month/Year: June/2022

Submitted by: Tracy/ Diane

Key items (two or three) for verbal report-out by MRC rep:

- Olympia oyster cultch bags recently collected by volunteers indicated that 2021 had the second highest rate of oyster settlement recorded in Fidalgo Bay!
- Surf smelt spawning activity is really starting to ramp up now after a quiet winter.
- Kelp monitoring is now underway. The first surveys of the season took place at our 3 survey sites on June 3, June 12, and June 25. 5 new kayaker volunteers are helping with the surveys this year.

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

Events/Meetings (events/meetings from past month with any noteworthy highlights and information on upcoming events):

- **June 9-** Skagit MRC Monthly Meeting (9am-11am). 21 people in attendance. Reps from the City of Anacortes, the Department of Natural Resources, and the Samish Indian Nation provided an update on the Trestle Replacement Project on Fidalgo Bay and how Skagit MRC could support this effort.
- **June 10-** Derelict Vessels Discussion with MRCs
- **June 6 and June 29-** Fidalgo Bay Day Planning Committee Meeting.
- **June 15-** Salish Sea Stewards Advisory Committee Meeting
- **June 16 -** Seafarer's Park Voluntary No Anchor Zone Meeting
- **June 20, Jul 13, and Aug 8 -** Bowman Bay Plant Maintenance Work Parties
- **July 16** (noon-3pm) - Salish Sea Stewards Social Networking and Educational Event at the Padilla Bay Interpretive Center. The education topic will be "Summer Research Projects at Padilla Bay" with possible mudflat visits.
- **August 20 -** Fidalgo Bay Day, - 11am-3pm at the Fidalgo Bay Resort

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

Project Updates (project activities and highlights from the past month, any new projects identified):

- **Salish Sea Stewards:** This year's Salish Sea Stewards Training ran from March 1 – March 24. 24 of the original 26 2022 new trainees graduated this year. Sara Brostrom of the Coastal Training Program at Padilla Bay is the Stewards Training Coordinator. Planning is underway for the annual SSS picnic on Saturday, July 16th at PBNERR for all Stewards. This year it will be a "bring your own lunch" event (to cover Covid unpredictability) and there will be an educational component. MRC members and the Friends of Skagit Beaches are invited. The Advisory Committee works continually to keep volunteers informed of current volunteer opportunities available through the SSS electronic news bulletin, "The Wave" and Facebook.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** The event date has been set for **Saturday, August 20, 2022**, 11am-3pm at the Fidalgo Bay Resort. So far 10 organizations confirmed participation this year. Activities

will include the Friends of Skagit Beaches Passport Activity & Children's Art Contest, the Shannon Point Marine Center touch tank, beach seining demonstration, educational booths, a no host-salmon BBQ, and hopefully Taylors Shellfish oysters & clams/blue mussels to grill. So far, we haven't had much luck in getting chowder donations. All the local restaurants were hit hard by the pandemic. The FBD Planning Committee met virtually on June 6th. The next planning meeting will be held June 29. The Committee consists of 4 MRC members, 3 veteran volunteers, and 4 Salish Sea Stewards recent graduates.

- Kayak Kelp Surveys: The kelp survey season is now underway! We currently survey three sites: Shannon Point, Bowman Bay Coffin Rocks, and Biz Point. Two of our experienced kayak volunteers, Brad Smith and Dale Fournier, will be moving back to the east coast soon. Brad leads the kelp surveys at Shannon Point. Brad held a shake down cruise in May to make sure the equipment is working properly and as a bit of a refresher training on the protocols. 7-8 kayakers attended the shake-down cruise including 5 new kayaker volunteers who will be helping with the surveys this year. The first official surveys this season were held June 3 at Shannon Point, June 12 at Biz Point, and June 25 at Bowman Bay. The Department of Natural Resources hosted the 2nd of 3 Floating Kelp Indicator Workshops on June 7 via Zoom. The purpose was to get feedback in the development of the new Vital Sign indicator for floating kelp canopy area.
- Bowman Bay Restoration: The Bowman Bay Plant Maintenance project is focused on enhancing existing vegetation, interplanting with trees and shrubs, expanding ground cover and increasing structural diversity and reducing erosion in shoreline restoration area. The plant maintenance work was put on for a while until the new elephant seal pup was fully weaned and removed from the area. Four monthly work parties are scheduled this season: May 18, June 20, July 13, and August 8, 2022. This effort will coincide with the Forage Fish Surveys as a public outreach opportunity. On May 19th two volunteers conducted a survival assessment the following day to help determine the maintenance needs going forward. The plants at the site look pretty good, but there has been some erosion. The site still needs more shrubs and trees to protect the understory. Soil tests indicate the soil is low in nitrogen.
- Forage Fish Surveys: Monthly forage fish surveys continue. Survey sites include: Fidalgo Bay, March Point, Bowman Bay, Kukatali Preserve, and our 3 index sites. Surf smelt spawning activity is starting to pick up now after a quiet winter. There were some huge spawn events right on top of the boat ramp at the Fidalgo Bay RV Park. The NWSC is hosting a forage fish training with WDFW on July 13 in Port Townsend. Contact Leah Robison for more information: robison@nwsraits.org.
- MRC Salish Sea School Intern: We contracted with the Salish Sea School to hire an intern, Trevor Derier to carry out a forage fish study at Marchs Point for the MRC that started in February. Trevor is also very active with the Pacific Mammal Institute. Trevor is mentoring a young 7th grader participating in the "Students Training as Research Scientists" (STaRS) program with the Salish Sea School. They will be invited to the next MRC meeting in July to introduce themselves and present an update on their project. The 7th grader will be giving her final presentation in January along with the other STaRS participants.
- Kids on the Beach: The KOTB program is now done for the year. Four schools participated in the spring KOTB program this year with 360 students: Sedro-Wooley, Conway, Concrete, and Anacortes middle schools. A report will be finalized in September. Planning is now underway for the fall KOTB program.
- Pinto Abalone Recovery: Field work is now complete. The data analysis and annual report will be finalized in September.
- Olympia Oyster Restoration: Field work just got started a few weeks ago. Volunteers collected bags of oyster cultch to monitor for new oyster recruitment in Fidalgo Bay and deploying new bags that will be collected next spring. Data indicates 2021 had the second highest rate of oyster settlement recorded in Fidalgo Bay. Volunteers also put out shell strings prepared by Puget Sound Restoration Fund at the trestle and Weaverling Spit. Bags of oyster seed were collected in Fidalgo Bay by the Swinomish and Padilla Bay NERR crews and relocated to Kukatali and Padilla Bay. They

also deployed new cultch bags in Fidalgo Bay to collect more seed next year or the following year, depending on the amount of oyster settlement.

- Sharpes Corner Stormwater Sampling: The QAPP will be completed and submitted for review and approval within the next two weeks. Sampling will take place after the first flush in the fall of 2022 (late September-October).

Other (anything not covered above, including local issues of interest to the regional group, advisory actions the MRC is taking, questions to the Commission, etc.): NA

Photos (photos of recent projects or members—include project, photo credit and additional info):

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Snohomish

Month/Year: June 2022

Submitted by: Elisa Dawson and Alex Pittman

Key items (two or three) for verbal report-out by MRC rep:

- Snohomish MRC hosted an introductory stakeholder meeting on May 25 for the Port Susan Conservation Action Plan (CAP) Update Project to present the project to the Snohomish-Stillaguamish LIO, Island LIO, and other interested partners. The MRC is currently planning for two additional stakeholder meetings, which will focus directly on topics identified as high priorities by partners, including a meeting to focus on plan implementation and a meeting to discuss the Objectives & Strategic Actions of the CAP, with focus on areas identified by partners as in need of updating, such as climate change, invasive species, and human, social, and cultural wellbeing.
- Snohomish County's contractor is planning to begin removing the first of four derelict vessels from the Snohomish Estuary the week of June 27, starting with the vessel on Jetty Island.
- The Crabber Education subcommittee is planning to coordinate in-person outreach at the 10th Street Boat Launch in Everett on July 1st, 2nd, 8th, and 9th, pending final details about opening day from WDFW. Depending on volunteer interest, in-person outreach may expand to additional sites.

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

None.

Events/Meetings (events/meetings from past month with any noteworthy highlights and information on upcoming events):

The MRC hosted their monthly meeting on May 18. The UW Evans School Student Consulting Team presented to the MRC on their Comprehensive Review of the Port Susan Marine Stewardship Area Conservation Action Plan, the MRC reviewed the Draft 2022-23 NWSC Grant Amendment, and the MRC approved the development of a letter of support for the Kayak Point Day-Use Improvement Project.

The MRC conducted Forage Fish Monitoring at Picnic Point and Howarth Park on May 19.

Elisa Dawson and Alex Pittman met with project consultant ESA to prep for the Introductory Stakeholder Meeting for the Port Susan Conservation Action Plan Review project on May 23.

MRC Members and Staff attended the Forage Fish Project MRC Check-In with WDFW on May 25.

MRC Members and Staff attended the Puget Sound Ecosystem Monitoring Program Salish Sea Marine Survival Project Workshop on May 25.

Elisa Dawson and Alex Pittman attended a call with Franchesca Perez, Marine Stewardship & Shellfish Biologist with the Stillaguamish Tribe, to discuss the Port Susan project on May 25.

The MRC hosted an Introductory Stakeholder Meeting for the Port Susan Conservation Action Plan Review project at the Stillaguamish Watershed Council Meeting on May 25.

Elisa Dawson and Alex Pittman met with project consultant ESA to debrief from the Introductory Stakeholder Meeting for the Port Susan Conservation Action Plan Review project on May 27.

Elisa Dawson and Alex Pittman attended the fifth Meadowdale Monitoring Team Meeting on June 1.

Elisa Dawson met with project consultant ESA to discuss the development of a Meadowdale Monitoring Website on June 3.

Elisa Dawson attended a monthly Snohomish MRC/DNR check-in with Max Showalter on June 6.

Elisa Dawson attended meetings for County Boards and Commissions staff to discuss the development of a new Boards and Commissions Application Process/SharePoint Site on June 6.

The Crabber Education Subcommittee met to discuss outreach for Summer 2022 on June 6.

MRC Members and Staff attended the Kelp Vital Sign Indicator Development Workshop #2 on June 6.

Elisa Dawson and Alex Pittman attended the UW Evans School Student Consulting Team presentation to the Island MRC on their Comprehensive Review of the Port Susan Marine Stewardship Area Conservation Action Plan at the Island County MRC Meeting on June 7.

Elisa Dawson attended a quarterly check-in with SWM Management on June 8.

Alex Pittman attended the Kelp Policy Advisory Committee Meeting to review Workshop #1 on June 10.

Elisa Dawson met with NWSC Staff to discuss congressional funding for derelict vessel removal on June 15.

The MRC hosted their monthly meeting on June 15. The meeting was held in-person at the Willis Tucker Community Park Activity Center. The MRC approved the Kayak Point Park Day-Use Improvement Project Letter of Support and discussed MRC general administration and planning.

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

The MRC's Phase 2 Amendment for the 2021-2023 funds has been fully signed and approved by Ecology.

Project Updates (project activities and highlights from the past month, any new projects identified):

Port Susan Marine Stewardship Area (MRC grant project for 2021-2022): The Port Susan team hosted an introductory stakeholder meeting on May 25 at the Stillaguamish Watershed Council (SWC), which doubles as the LIO Implementation Committee for the Stillaguamish watershed. We also invited members of the Island County LIO and stakeholders who had previously expressed an interest in continued engagement. At this meeting, we introduced the project, discussed the input we've already solicited from stakeholders, and solicited additional direct input on a draft progress tracker, a draft crosswalk with the Puget Sound Partnership Action Agenda, and draft agendas for the two follow up stakeholder meetings.

The Port Susan team is currently planning for the two follow up meetings, which will occur in late June and early July, and will focus on the Objectives & Strategic Actions of the CAP and Implementation Planning. The contents of these meetings are being developed in direct response to input already solicited from stakeholders, who identified specific gaps in the existing Objectives and Strategic Actions, and who expressed an interest in focusing on implementation and connecting efforts in Port Susan with regional planning efforts like the PSP Action Agenda.

The MRC also completed the grant amendment process with the NWSC to continue with Phase 2 of the Port Susan project in 2022-23.

Derelict Vessels (NWSF funds): Snohomish County is under contract with NRC to remove four derelict vessels from the Snohomish Estuary. They are planning to begin removing vessels the week of June 27, starting with the vessel on Jetty Island.

Below projects are other projects of the MRC funded by SWM fees:

Forage Fish Monitoring: Forage fish samples continue to be taken once per month at Picnic Point and Howarth Park. Sampling at Meadowdale is now on hold with beach access closed on for construction of the Meadowdale Beach & Estuary Restoration Project. June sampling at Picnic Point and Howarth Park is scheduled for June 16.

Nearshore Restoration: MRC staff have continued to work with project consultant ESA to develop and finalize the Meadowdale Monitoring Plan. A final draft for review was provided by ESA on May 13, and the Meadowdale Monitoring Team met to discuss the draft on June 1. The team also coordinated the submittal of an application for Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program (ESRP) funding for a component of Meadowdale monitoring on sediment tracking that is being led by the Tulalip Tribes.

Marine Vegetation Monitoring: Kelp Monitoring dates have been scheduled for July and August. All three sites (Edmonds, Mukilteo, Meadowdale) will be monitored in July. Possible dates are July 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, & 27. Edmonds will be monitored a second time in August. Possible dates are August 10 & 12. SWM Staff will monitor Hat Island in August. Possible dates are August 11 & 25.

Crabber Education: The Crabber Education subcommittee met on June 6 to discuss outreach plans for 2022. The team is planning to coordinate in-person outreach at the 10th Street Boat Launch in Everett on July 1st, 2nd, 8th, and 9th, pending final details about opening day from WDFW. Depending on volunteer interest beyond the subcommittee, in-person outreach may expand to additional sites throughout the County.

No updates for:

- Snohomish Estuary Pilings Project
- Oil Spills
- Stormwater (formerly Mussel Watch)
- Outreach

Other (anything not covered above, including local issues of interest to the regional group, advisory actions the MRC is taking, questions to the Commission, etc.):

None.

Upcoming Events:

- Forage Fish Monitoring – June 16
- Crabber Outreach – July 1, 2, 8 & 9
- Kelp Kayak Monitoring – July 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 & 27
- Port Susan Stakeholder Meetings 2 & 3 – dates TBD
- Next MRC Meeting – July 20

Photos (photos of recent projects or members—include project, photo credit and additional info):

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Whatcom

Month/Year: JUNE 2022

Submitted by: Austin Rose

Key items (two or three) for verbal report-out by MRC rep:

- The MRC has a vacancy for an Economic interest position interest position. This vacancy is advertised on the MRC homepage <https://www.whatcomcountymrc.org/>
- The MRC's Beach Seine with Schools program was highlighted in the Cascadia Daily News. <https://www.cascadiadaily.com/news/2022/jun/07/students-track-fish-populations-in-bellingham-bay/>

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

- The Whatcom MRC welcomes Jim Boyle to the committee! Jim was appointed to a Conservation/Environmental interest position on the MRC. Jim serves as a consultant to several local and international organizations including the Organization for Tropical Studies, Stockholm Environmental Institute, and the Lummi Island Heritage Trust.

Events/Meetings (events/meetings from past month with any noteworthy highlights and information on upcoming events):

- The MRC held their June meeting on June 2. In addition to project updates, meeting topics included:
 - Boulevard Park Restoration – The MRC recently declined to provide a letter of support for the City of Bellingham's effort to secure funding for the Boulevard Park Shoreline and Public Access Improvements. The MRC needed more information about the project and had concerns about the habitat/conservation benefit. Gina Austin (City of Bellingham) and Jim Johannesen (Coastal Geologic Services provided project details to the committee, and highlighted the goals of the project.
 - Dana Oster, NWSC, shared a DRAFT layout of the voluntary no-anchor zone proposed for Chuckanut Bay, based on DNR eelgrass data from 2008. Dana asked for feedback and would like approval from the MRC to move forward with permitting by August. Data sheets were shared for members to conduct vessel counts to assess the anchor activity in the area.
 - The MRC will not be meeting in July. The next meeting is scheduled for August 4.

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

Project Updates (project activities and highlights from the past month, any new projects identified):

Education and Outreach

- **Beach seine with schools (from Mike MacKay):** The MRC completed their last “Beach Seine with Schools” program on June 7 with 22 fourth graders from Birchwood Elementary. Lummi Tribal member Harlan James Sr. spoke to the children about the importance of salmon and what they mean to the Native American people. He pointed out Portage Island where his mom was born, and several other landmarks, like the slide near the cement plant where he used to fish for salmon. He spoke of how he and his daughter fished in the Nooksack River and the many types of salmon they caught here: chinook, chum, coho, and pinks. He spoke of the very large size of chinook salmon has shrunk over the years, being half of its former size. There were several questions from the students who were clearly very engaged with his talk. A single **5.7 cm hatchery chinook** was in the first set which was the only salmon caught this day. But that didn't seem to matter to the students who were fascinated by the catch of starry flounder, shiner perch, sticklebacks, and numerous sculpins. The students took turns measuring the fish and recording the catch. Of particular interest was how the starry flounder "felt" compared to the spiny stickleback.

The event was highlighted in the Cascadia Daily News:

<https://www.cascadiadaily.com/news/2022/jun/07/students-track-fish-populations-in-bellingham-bay/>

A subcommittee met to develop a project evaluation, which will be sent via google forms to participating teachers.

- The MRC will host a booth at the What's the Point event on June 18. Several members volunteers to participate. This is a free event to raise the awareness of the special resources protected in the “Cherry Point Aquatic Reserve” managed by Washington Department of Natural Resources. The event is being held Semiahmoo due to the stairs needing repair at Point Whitehorn.
- Whatcom Water Week will be held September 10 -18. The MRC was asked to partner with the Ocean Conservancy, Surfrider Foundation, and Re Sources for the International Coastal Cleanup schedule for September 17 10:00am – noon, tentatively occurring at Locust Beach.

Monitoring

- **Olympia oysters:** The annual Olympia oyster population survey in N. Chuckanut Bay was completed on May 18. Students from Bellingham Technical College (BTC) Fisheries and Aquaculture assisted the MRC. 12 bags of seasoned Pacific oyster shell, donated by Taylor Shellfish, were placed in the plots. One plot was completely washed out, most likely from the winter storms in late 2021. Paul Troutman has set out ceramic tiles to assess for larvae recutiment,

Other (anything not covered above, including local issues of interest to the regional group, advisory actions the MRC is taking, questions to the Commission, etc.):

- The MRC Chair, Eleanor, was contacted by Professor Craig Thomas at the Evans School of Public Policy and Governance at the University of Washington. Craig is part of a research team studying how collaborative partnerships use scientific findings in their decision-making processes. They

are not evaluating the performance of partnerships. Their goal is to develop recommendations for policymakers to improve how science is disseminated and provide guidance for environmental partnerships, including MRCs. Five current MRC members have agreed to be interviewed. This work is funded by the National Science Foundation.

- The SW Lummi Island Beach Cleanup is scheduled for July 14. The MRC will work with Specialized Marine Transport who will provide a landing craft to transport volunteers from Squalicum Harbor to the southwest side of Lummi Island. The MRC intern is currently working on a flyer to recruit additional volunteers from Lummi Island.

Photos:

Photo credit for all photos: Austin Rose



Harland James, Lummi Nation, sharing stories about the size of salmon he caught with his family.



Data collection!



The seine led by Don Kruse, Lummi Natural Resources staff and MRC member Mike MacKay.