



**Meeting:** Northwest Straits Commission  
**Date:** August 29, 2025  
**Time:** 10:00 AM- 12:00 PM  
**Location:** [Virtual Zoom Link](#) Meeting ID: 820 0015 4545 Passcode: 055701

*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.*

**Documents for NW Straits Commission Review:**

- July Meeting Minutes
- MRC Grant Proposal Project Summary
- Draft 2026 NWSC Meeting Dates

10:00 – 10:10 AM	<b>Welcome and introductions</b> Tribal acknowledgement July Meeting Minutes approval	Alan Clark, Chair
10:10 – 10:25 AM	<b>Committee Updates</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Executive Committee</li><li>• External Relations Committee</li><li>• Science Advisory Committee</li></ul>	Jamie Stephens Elsa Schwartz Emily Grason
10:25 – 10:40 AM	<b>Conference Updates</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Registration is Live!</li><li>• Guests and partners</li><li>• Conference Session: MRC Full Potential</li><li>• Conference Session: Collaborative Networking</li></ul>	Caitlyn Blair Caitlyn Blair Sasha Horst Jessica Owens
10:40 – 10:50 AM	<b>Business Items</b> Draft 2026 NWSC Meeting Dates Funding and budget update September NWSC meeting on San Juan Island	Caitlyn Blair Sasha Horst Caitlyn Blair



**Northwest  
Straits**  
COMMISSION

agenda

10:50 – 10:55 AM	<b>Project Updates</b> Whatcom Vessel Turn in Event Media Day	Jeff Whitty and Jessica Owens
10:55 – 11:10 AM	<b>Approval of 2025-27 MRC Grant Proposals</b>	Sasha Horst
11:10 – 11:40 AM	<b>MRC Reports</b>	
11:40 – 11:50 AM	<b>Commissioner Updates</b> (NW Indian Fisheries Commission, Puget Sound Partnership)	
11:50 – 12:00 PM	<b>Public Comment and Partner Updates</b>	
12:00 PM	<b>Adjourn</b>	

*The next regularly scheduled NW Straits Commission meeting will be Friday, September 27, 2025, in person on San Juan Island. Please see the [NWSC events page](#) for more information about our meetings.*



# Minutes

July 25, 2025, 10:00 AM- 12:00 PM  
Virtual Zoom Meeting  
Northwest Straits Commission meeting

## Attendees

**Commission Members:** Jeff Taylor (Jefferson), Ken Collins (Island), Elsa Schwartz, Emily Grason, Rick Beauregard (Whatcom), Jamie Stephens (Vice Chair), Alan Clark (Clallam – Chair), Tim Ellis (Snohomish), Pete Haase (Skagit – Alternate), Ginny Broadhurst, Karin Roemers-Klevin (San Juan – Alternate), Larry Epstein (Puget Sound Partnership)

**Commission Staff:** Dana Oster, Jeff Whitty, Caitlyn Blair, Sasha Horst, Lucas Hart, Allie Simpson, Jessica Owens, Leah Skare, Daniel Duncan, Suzanne Shull

**Others in Attendance:** Glen “Alex” Alexander, Eric Lewis (Blaine City Council, Ward 1), Steve Seymour, Kaylee Galloway, Dana Flerchinger, Gary Stoyka, Mike MacKay (Whatcom – Alternate)

**Absent:** Christina Koons (San Juan), Cecilia Gobin (NW Indian Fisheries Commission)

## Welcome and Wildcat Cove Site Visit

Commissioners arrived at Wildcat Cove for the Whatcom MRC site visit. Alan opened the meeting with the tribal acknowledgement.

## Remarks from Whatcom County Council Member Kaylee Galloway

Whatcom County Council member Kaylee Galloway shared remarks about current efforts in the County that relate to the work of the Commission, and on the collaborative role of the MRC within county government. She shared that the County is working on several adaptation strategies and mitigation in response to climate change, after completing a climate vulnerability assessment to identify assets to protect, the hazards that may put those assets at risk, and an assessment of the overlap of assets and hazards. Whatcom County is also working on their [2025 Comprehensive Plan Update](#), and coordinating closely with Lummi Nation and Nooksack Indian Tribe on coordination of culvert removal to improve salmon migration routes.

## Whatcom MRC: Working Together for Eelgrass Protection

Whatcom MRC member, Glen “Alex” Alexander presented on the MRC’s eelgrass protection and preservation work at Wildcat Cove near Larrabee State Park. The MRC partnered with WA Department of Natural Resources and Western Washington University to conduct eelgrass surveys at the site and developed and are now implementing a social marketing campaign to prevent boaters from driving on or dragging their boat on the eelgrass. The NW Straits Foundation hired interns to support the effort by informing boaters about how to avoid impacting the eelgrass habitat when using the boat launch. For more information about Whatcom MRC’s eelgrass protection project, visit their [website](#).



# Minutes

## **Commissioner Introductions**

Commissioners reconvened at the Whatcom Public Works building. Alan Clark opened the second half of the meeting with introductions.

## **Remarks from Ginny Broadhurst**

Ginny Broadhurst shared remarks regarding her time serving on the NW Straits Commission and noted that she is resigning her position as a Gubernatorial appointee.

## **Committee Updates**

**Executive Committee:** The Committee reviewed the NW Straits Commission July meeting agenda and draft strategic plan poster. The Committee also discussed funding redistribution opportunities to support MRCs while expected federal funds are pending. The topic will be revisited if need be in the future.

**External Relations Committee:** Elsa Schwartz shared on July 15, 2025, the House Natural Resources Committee advanced H.R. 2860, a bill to reauthorize the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative through 2031 and provide federal funding to support locally led marine resource conservation. A Senate version, S. 1433, passed out of the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee earlier this year. It proposes \$3 million per year in funding to the Northwest Straits Commission. Both bills now await full House and Senate votes before they can become law. Additionally, U.S. Representative Larsen is reaching out to MRCs to schedule site visits at their local project sites in August.

**Science Advisory Committee:** The Committee has held consultations with five MRCs on project proposals. Each MRC was offered the opportunity and five followed up to request a consultation. The Committee is also identifying ways to engage with MRCs in order to provide specialized individual advice on specific topics of expertise and ensure MRCs are receiving multiple perspectives as a full Committee.

## **Business Items**

Staff shared updates on the following business items:

**NWSC Meeting Norms Agreement:** At the January 2025 NW Straits Commission meeting, Commissioners and staff reviewed and approved the NW Straits Commission Meeting Norms document. To encourage participation in the norms, Commissioners suggested and approved creating an agreement document for NW Straits Commission members and staff to sign. Staff provided the agreement document for Commissioners and staff to sign.



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**MRC Conference November 7 & 8:** Registration for the MRC Conference will be available in August! Stay tuned to the [2025 Conference Website](#) for more information as planning is well underway, and subcommittees are working hard to outline their sessions and invite speakers.

**Strategic Plan Poster:** NW Straits Commission staff prepared a draft strategic plan poster that illustrates the key points of the recently approved internal-facing strategic plan. The poster is meant to be used as an external-facing communications tool. The Executive Committee voiced their support for the poster. The NW Straits Commission approved the poster by consensus and can be viewed on the [NW Straits Commission website](#).

**Blue Schools Initiative Letter of Support:** The Northwest Maritime Center recently presented to the NW Straits Commission on their Blue Schools Initiative. They submitted a \$2.35M Congressional Directed Spending Request to Senator Cantwell's office to support this initiative. They have requested a letter of support from the NW Straits Commission. The NW Straits Commission approved the letter of support by consensus.

## **Blaine Marine Economy and Research Institute for Sustainability (MERIS)**

Steve Seymour presented about the Blaine Marine Economy and Research Institute for Sustainability (MERIS). MERIS is a Blaine-based marine-centric multi-use hub for industry, community, and applied research builds upon existing local resources and networks unique to Blaine, Washington.

## **Sound IQ**

Suzanne Shull and Jessica Owens provided an update about the new Sound IQ, a web-based platform for MRC and Commission data that we will be re-launching soon. Please feel free to explore the [website "soft" launch](#), which is a limited release of the site before the full launch. The goal of a soft launch is to test functionality, gather feedback, and fix issues without the visibility of a full-scale launch. We are working on video tutorials which will be included in the full launch, stay tuned for updates! Please contact [info@nwstraits.org](mailto:info@nwstraits.org) if you have feedback or questions.

## **MRC Reports**

### **Clallam MRC – Alan Clark**

- A Clallam Bay "shake-out paddle" took place on June 25, for the kelp monitoring team to practice with their gear and protocol and re-familiarize themselves with the site.
- Members and volunteers on the kelp monitoring team participated in filming for an educational film by Puget Sound Ecosystem Monitoring Program and NOAA collaborators.



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The film will focus on estuary restoration and nearshore habitat monitoring efforts, especially related to the Elwha River and salmon recovery.

## **Island MRC – Ken Collins**

- The MRC has a new coordinator! We are pleased to welcome Elise Adams.
- The MRC had the pleasure of meeting with Representative Larsen (WA 2<sup>nd</sup> congressional district) at the Keystone Reserve.
- The MRC reviewed and added comments to the Island County Comprehensive Plan
- Kelp Kayak monitoring has begun thanks to lead Carter Webb!

## **Jefferson MRC – Jeff Taylor**

- ShrimpFest tabling event, attended June 21. 5 MRC members and 1 past MRC member volunteered to table from 9am-6pm and made 168 direct contacts.
- Crabbing 101 (Catch more Crab) Workshop was held on June 25. 16 attendees heard from 3 speakers (Jason Morgan, NWSF; Liz Tobin, Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe, and Daniel Sund, WA Dept of Fish and Wildlife) on derelict crab pots and the importance of properly placing pots out, crab identification, fisheries management and regulation, and a hands-on demonstration from MRC member Troy McKelvey on how to assemble and place a crab pot.

## **San Juan MRC – Karin Roemers-Klevin**

- Dock talks are well underway for the summer. Our interns are connecting with boaters about best practices to lessen their impact on marine habitats, passing out whale warning flags, and providing resources for a safe boating experience.
- Plastic Free Salish Sea is celebrating Plastic Free July with a social media campaign on Facebook and Instagram to share ideas for how to cut down on single use plastics and educate about plastic recycling.
- The MRC is helping plan and support the San Juan Local Integrating Organization for a local forum with the Puget Sound Partnership Leadership Council in late August. Several MRC members will offer their subject matter expertise through presentations or conversations on a boat tour to see some of the key issues faced in San Juan waters.

## **Skagit MRC – Pete Haase**

- MRC Member and former Project Lead of the Salish Sea Stewards, Darla Gay Smith received special recognition from the Skagit MRC for her countless contributions in building a successful Salish Sea Stewards training program.
- Bowman Bay Beach Seining stats from January 2024 – June 2025 we captured a total of 3,935 fish representing 23 unique species. In June we caught 2 Chinook and a big striped surf perch (have only ever caught a couple of these)



# Minutes

- This year approximately 5,600 juvenile pinto abalone were outplanted at 8 sites in Skagit including 3 brand new sites.

## **Snohomish MRC – Tim Ellis**

- Two MRC members conducted crabber outreach on July 5 and 6 and spoke with 122 crabbers at the Port of Everett.
- The marine vegetation subcommittee is working to plan an outreach event focused on the kelp and eelgrass of Mukilteo and Hat Island. The event will be held on September 10 at the Rose Hill Community Center in Mukilteo.

## **Whatcom MRC – Rick Beauregard**

- Applications for Whatcom County's Vessel Turn-In event closed on July 15, with vessel turn in and recycling starting on July 28. A media day will be held on site for the project team, invited media, and elected officials on August 6.
- The first bull kelp monitoring survey will occur at Aiston Preserve on July 25. Surveys at Cherry Point, Southwest Lummi Island, and Point Whitehorn will occur in August.
- The Whatcom MRC needs a Chair, and has two vacancies, both for recreation interest positions.

## **Project Updates**

**European Green Crab Update:** Allie Simpson provided an update on European Green Crab management in Drayton Harbor and Samish Bay. In Drayton Harbor, 381 green crabs were caught out of 1,800 traps that were set. Staff work closely with WA Dept. Of Fish & Wildlife as well as partners from other organizations including US Fish and Wildlife to trap Drayton Harbor. Most green crabs are captured from the "Pillars" site and mouth of Dakota Creek.

## **Commissioner Updates**

**Puget Sound Partnership:** The Partnership is in the process of executing their new funding agreement with US Environmental Protection Agency. This agreement includes funds that support the NW Straits Commission, including support that routes on to the MRCs. The Partnership is still operating under a state spending freeze on contracts, hiring and travel, and they expect that to continue for the foreseeable future. The Leadership Council will meet in San Juan on August 20-21. The 2026-2030 Draft Action Agenda is now in the first steps of Tribal review.

## **Public Comment and Partner Updates**

There was no public comment.



## Commission staff highlights - [August 2025]

### MRC Support

**MRC Grants:** MRCs received and responded to proposal feedback provided by NWSC staff and the Science Advisory Committee. The 2025-27 project proposals are now in the process of being converted into grant agreements. A list of proposed projects is provided in the meeting materials for Commission review and approval.

The 2023-25 MRC grants supported by state and EPA funding through the Puget Sound Partnership are in the final quarter, wrapping up on September 30. The current NOAA-funded grants will end December 31 this year.

**MRC Meeting Attendance:**

Island MRC meeting 08/5: Caitlyn

Jefferson MRC meeting 08/5 Leah, Caitlyn

Whatcom MRC meeting 08/7 Caitlyn

San Juan MRC meeting 08/7 Caitlyn, Jeff, Sasha

Skagit MRC meeting 08/14 Caitlyn

Clallam MRC meeting 08/18 Caitlyn

### Regional Projects

**Kelp Plan:** Staff visited the Squaxin Island kelp bed and attended the signing of a WA Dept of Natural Resources and Squaxin Island Tribe agreement, creating a protected area for Squaxin Island Kelp beds. More can be read in the related [Seattle Times article](#).

**Kelp Monitoring:** MRC volunteer kayakers continue to go strong with their kelp surveys. Although several teams have had to postpone surveys due to high winds, it is great to see these teams putting safety first. Surveys for many MRCs are planned to extend through September.

**Forage Fish:** Staff is working with WDFW to plan for a volunteer training opportunity.

**European Green Crab:** The WA Conservation Corps Crew completed their term working on green crab trapping in Samish Bay. Trapping will continue in Samish Bay through September with volunteers and partner staff assistance. Trapping in Drayton Harbor will continue with help from WA Dept of Fish and Wildlife technicians.

**Voluntary No-Anchor Zones:** Staff are finalizing site maps and polygons for virtual voluntary no-anchor zones to share with WA Dept of Natural Resources. Anchor Out of Eelgrass social marketing campaign is more than halfway through the boating season (April – Sept).



## Commission staff highlights - [August 2025]

**Derelict Vessels:** On August 6, partners and media met at Landings at Colony Wharf hosted by the Port of Bellingham for a live demo of a 32-foot boat deconstruction for media day to showcase work/partnerships. [KING 5](#) and the [Bellingham Herald](#) covered media day. NWSC staff will work with partners on a debrief and joint press release in the coming weeks.

**SoundIQ:** The project is in the “soft launch” feedback stage. Commission staff continue to work through the steps for a planned full public launch in September. [Our Work | SoundIQ | Mapping the Sound](#)

### Operations

**Staff:** Dana will be on maternity leave approximately beginning around early August and returning early January 2026. Daniel Duncan, the Veterans Conservation Corps intern has moved out of state but will be continuing to assist with green crab data processing.

**Budget:** Federal funding from fiscal year 2024 that had been pending in the NOAA grants system has now been awarded. This is programmatic funding of \$1 million that will be spent over the next three years. NWSC staff are working with staff from the Puget Sound Partnership on a new interagency agreement for EPA funding.

**Communications:** Waiting on the final word from the contract office to start website work.

**Contracts and grants:** The grant agreements with partners in the 2023-25 state kelp proviso funding are now closed. These agreements will not be renewed in 2025-27.

**Broad Community Engagement:** NWSC and MRC staff met to discuss the importance of equity in public spending and specifically considering resources and strategies for purchasing and contracting. This is part of our monthly meeting series where we discuss different community engagement strategies.

### Other Meetings Attended

- Understanding Climate Resilience in Nearshore Restoration 07/29: Jeff
- Kelp and Eelgrass Risk Assessment Workshop 08/04: Jeff, Allie
- Whatcom County Derelict Vessel Turn-in Media Day 08/06: Dana, Jeff, Jessica, Sasha
- Signing of Squaxin Island kelp protected area 08/08: Jeff
- Olympia Oyster Larval Transport presentation 8/14: Allie
- Green Crab North Puget Sound Regional Workgroup 8/20: Allie, Leah
- Ecology Program Management Team meetings 8/11; 8/14; 8/18: Lucas
- Ecology Supervisor Support Development Cohort 8/15: Lucas
- Virtual Puget Sound Partnership Leadership Council Meeting 8/20: Lucas



## **2026 meeting schedule - DRAFT**

Virtual meetings are 10am-12pm via Zoom. In-person meetings are 10am-3pm, with lunch provided. In-person meeting locations are to be determined but will rotate throughout the Northwest Straits region.

January 30, 2026 – in-person Skagit

February 27, 2026 – virtual

April 2 & 3, 2026 – Retreat at Elsa's (Camano)

April 24, 2026 – virtual

May 29, 2026 – in-person Snohomish

June 26, 2026 – virtual

July 24, 2026 – in-person Clallam/San Juan

August 28, 2026 – virtual

September 25, 2026 – in-person Island

November 6 & 7, 2026– Annual Conference at NW Maritime Center, Jefferson?

December 11, 2026 – virtual

## MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

**County:** Clallam

**Month/Year:** August 2025

**Submitted by:** Amelia Kalagher

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

- The MRC has been awarded an alternative funding source through the Strait Ecosystem Recovery Network to begin in October 2025 for the Elwha Stewardship project (SaniKan and dog waste bags).
- Pinto abalone survey dives in the Port Angeles subregion and surveys of both Freshwater Bay and Clallam Bay are planned within the next month.
- Forage fish sampling was briefly paused at Elwha Beach, with guidance from WDFW, due to safety concerns following the Indian Creek fuel spill. Sampling is now safely resuming.

**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):

- A kayak survey of the small kelp bed at Observatory Point was conducted on July 28<sup>th</sup>.
- The MRC held its regular monthly meeting on Monday, August 18<sup>th</sup>.
- The MRC plans to host an educational table at both Forever Streamfest (Sept 20<sup>th</sup>) and Dungeness River Nature Festival (Sept 26<sup>th</sup>).

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

- The MRC has been awarded an alternative funding source through the Strait Ecosystem Recovery Network to begin in October 2025 for the Elwha Stewardship project (SaniKan and dog waste bags).

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

- *Olympia oysters*: Olympia oyster populations at the Sequim Bay restoration site were surveyed in May. Early review of the results shows a healthy population and high recruitment relative to previous years.
- *Forage fish*: Forage fish sampling continues at Elwha Beach, Cline Spit and Ediz Hook. Sampling was temporarily paused at Elwha Beach with guidance from WDFW due to safety concerns after the Indian Creek fuel spill. Sampling is now safely resuming.
- *Elwha Beach*: Clallam MRC continued to steward the beach at the mouth of the Elwha River. The MRC has been awarded an alternative funding source through the Strait Ecosystem Recovery Network to begin in October 2025 for the Elwha Stewardship project.
- *Pinto abalone*: Eight days of dive surveys have been tentatively scheduled for September 2025, with four backup days for weather in early October.
- *Kelp monitoring*: A survey of the small bed at Observatory Point (in Freshwater Bay) was conducted on July 28<sup>th</sup>. Surveys for the large Freshwater Bay bed and Clallam Bay bed are scheduled for late August.
- *Pigeon guillemots*: Pigeon guillemot monitoring for summer 2025 continues through August, and as long as nesting activity continues.

- *Ediz Hook revegetation*: A planting event took place in March 2025, and no additional planting is planned. The site will be monitored periodically to check plant survival and any additional needs.
- *Education – outreach cards*: MRC members continued supplying local eateries and community establishments with educational outreach cards featuring information on local marine life.
- *Education – displays*: MRC members continued developing new displays for outreach at local festivals.
- *Education – oil spill response*: The HAZWOPER refresher and oiled wildlife training was offered in April. The MRC does not expect to provide additional trainings this year.
- *Sound Toxins (community partner project, Feiro Marine Life Center)*: MRC alternate Nancy Stephanz continues to process samples weekly for the Sound Toxins project, with Feiro Marine Life Center.

**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 to report.

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

- None this month – lots next month!

## MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

**County:** Island

**Month/Year:** August / 2025

**Submitted by:** Elise Adams

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

- Pacific herring eggs found at Cavalero Beach!
- Completion of three Hoypus Point and Cornet Bay stewardship events this summer
- Shark Lady has finally been removed from Holmes Harbor!

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

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

#### Previous Meetings/Events:

- Aug 4: Puget Sound Institute Kelp & Eelgrass Workshop
- Aug 5: MRC Monthly Meeting

#### Upcoming Meetings/Events:

- Aug 27: Cornet Bay & Hoypus Stewardship Day
- Sept 2: MRC Monthly Meeting
- Oct 7: MRC Monthly Meeting
- Nov 7-8: NWSC MRC Conference

**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):

#### Monitoring – Forage Fish:

- WDFW processed the February Cavalero Beach samples and discovered developing Pacific Herring eggs. Unlike surf smelt and sand lance, herring do not spawn directly on the beach but lay down their eggs on the nearshore vegetation, which can break loose and drift onto shore. Finding herring eggs here is significant because while WDFW monitors spawning herring populations, they only have capacity to visit sites that have seen herring spawn in the last decade. As herring eggs had not been found here for at least 15 years, this site was no longer considered a survey priority. In direct response to this sample, WDFW will extend surveys this coming year to ensure these grounds are being sampled for recent spawning. These surveys support the Forage Fish [Vital Sign](#), which helps recognize the significance of herring populations to the overall health of Puget Sound.

#### Bull Kelp Surveys:

- Surveying has continued throughout the windy month of August with successful surveys taking place at Hoypus Point, Polnell Point, Ebey's Landing, and Possession Point.

ADV program:

- On August 11<sup>th</sup>, the Shark Lady was removed from Holmes Harbor in South Whidbey Island. Shark Lady is now in possession of WA DNR and is being tested for hazards while it awaits proper disposal.

Stewardship – Cornet Bay/Hoypus Point:

- We are hosting our last planned Cornet Bay & Hoypus Point Stewardship Day on Wednesday, August 27<sup>th</sup>. We have continued to monitor both sites for watering and for seasonal growth throughout the summer's two previous events in June and July to understand future restoration and monitoring needs. We are incredibly pleased with the volunteer turnout for these events to help with mulching, weeding, and general site maintenance!

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



Hoypus Point – Stewardship  
& restoration

Photo by Kelly Zupich

## MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

**County:** San Juan County

**Month/Year:** August 2025

**Submitted by:** Sam Whitridge & Katie Johnson

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

- The MRC was well represented at the San Juan County Fair through an informational booth and a Litter Critter Lab hosted by Plastic Free Salish Sea. It was a great way to engage the public in our work and share the message of marine resource protection and restoration.
- San Juan MRC is recruiting for a youth position to join the committee. In early August the County Council approved and enthusiastically supported adding up to two youth positions on the committee to hear from young people about their concerns and ideas to support valuable marine resources, habitats and all those who enjoy them.
- Recent connections with state leadership include a site visit from Rep. Rick Larsen and NWSC Governor's appointee Jamie Stephens to view progress of the Jackson Beach restoration and MRC participation at the San Juan Local Forum for Puget Sound Partnership Leadership Council.

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

At the August meeting Chair and Vice Chair positions were discussed and both Adam and Karin will be carrying on in their respective roles. The San Juan County Council approved a resolution to formally add up to two youth positions to the MRC. Recruitment has been underway to promote the position and receive applications. Candidate interviews will be happening at the end of August/early September with the hopes of making a recommendation from the MRC to Council at the September 4 meeting.

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

- Dock Talks - August 2
- San Juan County Fair – August 14-17
- San Juan LIO Local Forum – August 20-21
- August 21 – Special MRC Meeting to discuss OPALCO tidal project
- September 4 – Next MRC Meeting (in person, SJI Yacht Club)
- September 26 – Northwest Straits Commission Meeting in Friday Harbor
- September 27 – Kelp Soire at the SJI Art Museum

**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):

The MRC engaged with the public at the San Juan County Fair on August 14-17. Adam Parrott, Karin Roemers-Kleven, and Mike Ramsey all helped staff the booth and share about the work of the MRC with the public. They highlighted the derelict vessel prevention program, passed out whale warning flags and shared about the Marine Stewardship Area. It was a fun and successful weekend connecting with the public.

Plastic Free Salish Sea hosted a Litter Critter Lab at the San Juan County Fair. Using recycled materials, mostly from the plastic film bin, people of all ages were invited to use their creativity to make creatures. Led by Sonora Tate and Ava Martin, our summer interns, the Litter Critter Lab helped youth see that discarded materials could be repurposed into something new. Samples included a butterfly, caterpillar and chicken. The kids jumped right in and began crafting critters from the recycled plastic, preventing it from going into the landfill and finding another purpose.

Dock talks continue throughout the boating season, led by our interns Sonora and Ava. They have been enjoying discussing marine issues with boaters including anchoring out of eelgrass, describing the updated distance regulations

for Southern Resident Killer Whales while passing out Whale Warning Flags, and connecting with kids about the wonders of the sea. It has been a great season with nearly 100 flags distributed to boaters and many discussions with flag owners about the updated distance regulations.

This summer has been busy for derelict vessel prevention and response. Windy days and numerous boaters have resulted in several groundings and reef strikes. The most recent incident of marine debris response and removal involved a huge oil spill boom that washed ashore on the south end of San Juan Island. DV Coordinator, Kari Koski worked with DNR to retrieve the debris and tow it away.

Vessel monitoring in eelgrass zones continues. While we haven't seen as robust sampling as previous years, each data point helps add to this growing database. MRC member Olivia Graham has been monitoring an eelgrass bed at Foruth of July Beach that has seen rapid declines. In her work with the Friday Harbor Labs she routinely dives at the location to assess the size and density of the eelgrass bed. Recently, it appears that this eelgrass zone is virtually gone, an ongoing issue throughout the San Juan Islands. Aerial flights have resumed to assess vessel presence in bays and across the county waters. Planning is underway for a kelp soiree in September to celebrate this incredible resource in conjunction with an exhibit at the San Juan Islands Art Museum.

**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.):

In early August, Marine Program staff met with US Representative Rick Larsen and NWSC commissioner Jamie Stephens for a site visit to Jackson Beach to look at the progress from the creosote removal project and next steps for the beach restoration. Sharing these project accomplishments with legislative representatives helps to gain support for multi-benefit restoration efforts. The example at Jackson Beach highlights regional collaboration and progress at a popular and beloved beach. Through restoration efforts, not only will the site become more aesthetically pleasing, but increase habitat and shoreline function while maintaining valuable barge access for infrastructure.

The San Juan LIO recently hosted the Puget Sound Partnership Leadership Council for a Local Forum in Friday Harbor. Since the MRC meets in conjunction with the LIO, several MRC members showed up to hear the presentation and provide support. MRC member Lovel Pratt presented at the Local Forum around increased large vessel traffic and increased risk in the Salish Sea. Other MRC members in attendance included Christina Koons, Joey Ullman and Mike Ramsey. NW Straits Commissioner Jamie Stephens and state representative Alex Rammel were present as well. It was a great opportunity to share the work of the marine committees in San Juan County and connect with leadership and partners around protecting and preserving our marine resources.

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



Dock talks at Roche Harbor. Photo by Ava Martin



MRC Chair, Adam Parrott, discussing MRC work at the San Juan County Fair. Photo by Sonora Tate



Plastic Free Salish Sea's Litter Critter Lab at the County Fair was a great success! Photos by Sonora Tate.



Plastic Free Salish Sea's Litter Critter Lab – participants used recycled materials to craft unique critters. Photo left by Sonora Tate. Photo right by Katie Johnson.



Representative Rick Larson, NWSC Jamie Stephens, and Marine Program staff on a site tour of Jackson Beach. Photo by Sam Whitridge



DNR towing away a huge oil spill boom washed ashore on San Juan Island. Photo by Kari Koski



Puget Sound Partnership Leadership Council Site Visit to Jackson Beach, salmon bank, and Agate Beach with support from MRC members Lovel Pratt and Christina Koons. Photos by Katie Johnson.

## MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

**County:** Skagit

**Month/Year:** Aug/2025

**Submitted by:** Tracy/Lynne

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

- Nearshore assessment and Priorities [\(NEAP\) Story Map](#) and [NEAP Tool](#) now available on the Skagit MRC website and the new SoundIQ! A video tutorial will be available soon.
- Two recent articles about native oyster restoration including interviews with Skagit MRC member Paul Dinnel about our oyster restoration work in Fidalgo Bay. Paul is also working with University of Washington students to measure the diversity of marine critters in native oyster restoration areas compared to areas with no oysters at various locations in Puget Sound.

**Membership/Leadership changes** (new/departing members, changes to chair/vice-chair, NWSC representative/alternate, staff): Melissa Ciesielski recently accepted a new position with the Puget Sound Partnership and will no longer be able to serve on the Skagit MRC as Catey Ritchie's alternate for the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community.

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

- **Aug 13- Fidalgo Bay Day Planning Meeting-** 2pm at the County Office.
- **Aug 14- Monthly MRC Meeting** via Teams 9am-11am. Caitlyn Blair shared an update on the Annual NWSI Conference.
- **Aug 15- Bowman Bay Beach Seining** – 11am at Deception Pass State Park.
- **Aug 27- Fidalgo Bay Day Planning Meeting-** 10am at the County Office
- **Sept 23- Fidalgo Bay Day Event-** 11am-3pm at the Fidalgo Bay Resort in Anacortes (4701, Fidalgo Bay Rd)- For more information check out the Skagit MRC's [Fidalgo Bay Day](#) event page.

**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 – Dale Fournier:
  - Many of the new SSS have been busy volunteering.
  - June 18th was the last Advisory Committee meeting before the summer break. Monthly meetings will start back up again in October and will be held the first Thursday of each month from October 2 to June, 2:30 - 4:30pm.
- Forage Fish Surveys – Pete Haase:
  - Skagit MRC has a subaward agreement with the Salish Sea School for Catherine Houck to coordinate the monthly forage fish monitoring at 7 Skagit MRC restoration and index sites.
  - Aug & Sept 2025 forage fish survey schedule:

Day	Date	Time	Location
Monday Wednesday	Aug. 11 Sept.10	9:30 am 10:30 am	FIDALGO BAY EAST
Monday Wednesday	Aug. 11 Sept.10	10:00 am 11:00 am	FIDALGO BAY WEST
Thursday Friday	Aug. 14 Sept. 12	9:00 am 10:00 am	BOWMAN BAY
Monday Monday	Aug. 18 Sept. 15	10:00 am 9:00 am	GUEMES CHANNEL
Monday Monday	Aug. 18 Sept. 15	9:00* am Explore to south 9:00 am	SIMILK BAY

- Kids on the Beach- Jude Apple:
  - Not much happening now. Schools are on summer break.
  - 1 school, 3 classes scheduled for the fall 2025 KOTB program.
  - Working on wrapping up the final report that's due September 30th.
- La Conner School Rain Garden – Tracy Alker:
  - Northwest Straits Foundation Interns are maintaining the rain garden through September 2025.
  - The interpretive sign frame and base has been ordered. It takes 5 weeks to ship. Hoping to have it delivered and installed before school starts back up again this fall.
  - Need to determine what to do with the remaining funds allocated for this project through December 31, 2025. Some ideas being discussed: additional plants, mulch, maintenance tools, plant id signs, desktop rain garden model for school classrooms.
- Fidalgo Bay Day –Tracy Alker:
  - 2025 Fidalgo Bay Day has been set for **Saturday, September 13, 2025**, 11am-3pm at the Fidalgo Bay Resort!
  - Jenn Dumas, a Salish Sea Steward AC member, is coordinating Fidalgo Bay Day this year as part of her Skagit Valley College class requirement and college credit.
  - 32 organizations have registered to participate with outreach booths, and most will have passport station questions.
  - All volunteer positions have been filled!
  - Event highlights include beach seining demo at 1pm, Shannon Point Marine Center touch tank, educational booths and passport stations, complimentary samples of seafood, kids craft activities, and Corra the Selkie.
  - 150 fliers have been distributed. Fliers include a QR code linked to the Skagit website event page. Posted on Facebook and online event pages and paid advertisement in the Skagit Kid Insider.
  - MRC member and City of Anacortes Council Member Carolyn Moulton will be the event MC and kick off the event with a welcome and introduce the Samish Indian Nation Hosts. Rosie Cayou James will provide a Coast Salish welcome.
  - Kids craft activities: Face painting. Button making (marine critter templates to color), crab and orca hats, and fish prints on canvas bags.
  - Complimentary chowder samples will be provided by Adrift, Island Café, and Gere-A-Deli. Erika and Dylan from the NWSF will be getting their Food Handlers Cards to help serve chowder.
  - Taylor Shellfish providing complimentary samples of shellfish.
  - Traditional Coast Salish No-Host Salmon BBQ.
  - Complimentary popcorn – borrowing the Salish Sea School's popcorn machine.
  - Door prizes for Fidalgo Bay Day volunteers provided by Anthony's, The Wishing Rock, Anacortes Oil & Vinegar, and the Watermark Book Company.
- Pinto Abalone Restoration – Paul Dinnel:
  - Nothing new to report.
  - Currently focused on routine hatchery production and maintenance for producing juvenile abalone to outplant next year.
  - Paul will be working with Puget Sound Restoration Fund on the 2025 Year- End Report due in September.
- Olympia Oyster Restoration – Paul Dinnel:
  - Two recent articles about native oyster restoration including interviews with Skagit MRC member Paul Dinnel. One focused on impacts of environmental stressors "[A Living Shoreline, Built One Oyster at a Time – KneeDeep Times](#)". The other one focused on oyster restoration work in Skagit County by the tribes and other organizations like the MRC "[A decades-long quest to restore Washington's only native oyster sees success](#)".

- Paul is working with the University of Washington students to measure the diversity of marine critters in native oyster restoration areas compared to areas with no oysters at various locations in Puget Sound including Fidalgo Bay.
  - Paul collected shell strings at the trestle and Weaverling Spit for the Puget Sound Restoration Fund for their standardized monitoring of oyster settlement throughout Puget Sound.
- Bull Kelp Kayak Surveys – Lynne Wenberg-Davidson:  
*Skagit surveys generally take place from June-September each year and include the following sites: Coffin Rocks (Steven Olsen - Lead), Biz Point (John Freeto - Lead), Shannon Point east/west (Lynne Wenberg - Lead) and new “Lone Tree Point” (Steven Olsen – Lead).*
  - 2025 Season is underway. One new kayaker, Bob Carey, has joined the team!
  - August surveys:
    - August 6 (Biz Point) – John Freeto (Lead): *healthy kelp bed*
    - August 7 (Coffin Rocks) – Steven Olsen (Lead), Elizabeth Drozda, Hal Lee: *Kelp bed significantly denser and larger in diameter/perimeter from July 2025. Southeast quadrant of kelp be between WP 128 and 129 very dense and extending southeast-ward. three black oyster catchers on rocks and flying around during survey. Noted an immature bald eagle heading south directly over rocks. Kelp bed and individual samples all very healthy appearing and thriving. Many overwintered specimens observed in dense area on east side of rocks by WP128 and WP 132. No bryozoans observed on blades of kelp this survey.*
    - August 8 (Lone Tree) – Steven Olsen (Lead), Hal Lee, Elizabeth Drozda, Lynne Wenberg: *Overall kelp density moderate to very light in area along perimeter. But several areas of sander kelp close to reef. Kelp bed and individual specimens very healthy. Spores noted on blades. A great variety of birds observed: a flock of black oyster catchers, a great blue heron, king fisher, several bald eagles (mature and immature), several species of gulls. Bulbs in near shore kelp bed eelgrass observed at depths of 1-3 ft.*
    - August 12 (Shannon Point) – Lynne Wenberg / Brad Smith (co-lead), Elizabeth Drozda: *Difficult tide and current combo, plus wind and boat traffic – we found the kelp bed at West but it was under 1-2 feet of water so we couldn’t track it. East bed – no bull kelp observed, but heavy sargassum close to shore. We plan to try another survey with minus tides next Thursday.*
- Bowman Bay Beach Seining– Lynne Wenberg-Davidson:
  - Funding is in place for NWSF to continue beach seining at Bowman Bay through December 2025.
  - Beach seining is now occurring month through the end of the year.

7/18	12:00 PM
8/14	9:00 AM
9/12	10:00 AM
10/10	12:00 PM
11/19	10:00 AM
12/12	11:00 AM

- June 18 seining results: 581 Shiner perch! Large numbers of shiner perch are typical in Bowman Bay during spawning season.

Date	Species	Count	Date	# Volunteers	Total Volunteer Hours
7/18/2025	staghorn sculpin	36	7/18/2025	4	10
7/18/2025	english sole	8			
7/18/2025	Chinook salmon (natural)	3			
7/18/2025	Snake pricklyback	2			
7/18/2025	Saddleback gunnel	1			
7/18/2025	Sand sole	2			
7/18/2025	Shiner perch	581			
7/18/2025	threespine stickleback	11			
7/18/2025	Total Fish:	644			

- Bowman Bay Plant Maintenance—Lynne Wenberg-Davidson:
  - MRC funding is in place for NWSF to continue plant maintenance at the restoration site through the 2025 growing season (May-October). Funding ends December 31, 2025.
  - A Stewardship Day was held on July 11<sup>th</sup> with 4 volunteers, 2 NWSF staff and 2 NWSF interns. Maintenance is requiring less and less effort. Work involved trimming around the conifers, so they can get more space and sunlight to grow. NWSF has been watering mostly weekly (except when the Park's water truck broke for a few weeks) and plan to continue as needed through end of summer. Natives in restoration area look great, very healthy, with few weeds.
  - Last Stewardship Day of the year was held August 13 with 5 volunteers and 2 NWSF staff. We pulled invasives from the south trail along the wetland area – 8 large leaf bags full!
- Skagit Shoreline Needs Assessment- Lynne Wenberg-Davidson:

The contract with Confluence Environmental has been extended through December 31, 2025, for an additional follow-on statement of work (\$10K). Updates this month:

  - The Nearshore Assessment and Priorities ([NEAP Tool](#)) and [NEAP Story Map](#) are now completed as of June 11, 2025.
  - The NEAP Tool, Story Map, [Data Dictionary](#) and [Prioritization Criteria](#) are all loaded up on SoundIQ2 as a “soft roll out” and also are available on the Skagit MRC website <https://www.skagitmrc.org/projects/skagit-shoreline-needs-assessment/>
  - A “how-to video” will be made as a tutorial for general public NEAP functionality is in the works – ECD August 2025
  - The buildout of the 5 high priority restoration projects identified in 2024 are in process of further development – ECD September 2025.

**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):

Bowman Bay Beach Seining- July 18





Steve Olsen holding a piece of kelp with zoospores  
Photo Credit: Lynne Wenberg-Davidson



Bull Kelp bed at Lone Tree Point  
Photo Credit: Lynne Wenberg-Davidson

## MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

**County:** Snohomish

**Month/Year:** Aug 2025

**Submitted by:** Elisa Dawson and Joycelyn Blue

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

- The marine vegetation subcommittee is working to plan an outreach event focused on the kelp and eelgrass of Mukilteo and Hat Island. The event will be held on September 10 at the Rose Hill Community Center in Mukilteo.
- Cali, the Marine Ecology Intern, has created a few Instagram reels of our kelp monitoring that have been shared on the NW Straits Instagram. Check them out!

**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):

Joycelyn Blue attended the Whatcom Vessel Turn-in Recycling Media Day on Aug 6

Joycelyn Blue and Tim Ellis attended a site visit for Representative Larsen and spoke to MRC projects on Aug 19

The MRC picnic was held on Aug 20 in place of the Aug meeting

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

None

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

**Strategic Planning / MRC Admin:** Evaluation of the success and areas for improvement of last year's strategic and annual planning efforts continues as the MRC works towards an annual workplan for 2026.

**Forage Fish Monitoring (MRC Grant 2024-2025):** Picnic Point and Meadowdale were sampled on Aug 25. Howarth Park occurred on Aug 21.

**Marine Vegetation Monitoring (MRC Grant 2024-2025):** August kelp monitoring was completed for Edmonds and Hat Island.

Monitoring and backup dates are scheduled as follows:

August:

Edmonds – 8/7

Hat Island – 8/20

September:

Hat Island – 9/4

**Marine Vegetation Outreach (MRC OTGP grant project for 2024 – 2025):** The outreach event will be held on September 10 at the Rose Hill Community Center in Mukilteo. Promotion for the event has begun and event planning continues.

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

**Nearshore Restoration:** The Marine Ecology Intern, Cali Weber, is working with the subcommittee to refine a scope of work that could be utilized to hire a consultant to conduct a shoreline monitoring assessment. The group met with members of Island County MRC to gather their thoughts and lessons learned.

**Outreach:** Beach cleanups in partnership with WSU Beach Watchers continue to be held quarterly. The quarter 3 clean up, using the ETAP protocol, will be held on September 20 at Kayak Point.

**Crabber Outreach/Oil Spill Preparedness and Prevention:** No updates

**Marine Water Quality:** The Water Quality subcommittee is working with the Marine Ecology Intern and ORCA on drafts of a Possession Sound marine report card.

**Derelict Vessels:** Two vessels have been identified for removal for 2025. Removal by the contractor is in progress.

Planning continues for a vessel turn-in event in February 2026 in partnership with DNR and the Port of Everett.

**Port Susan Marine Stewardship Area:** None

**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.):

**Upcoming Events:**

- Dive In! Exploring Hat Island and Mukilteo's Kelp and Eelgrass – Sep 10
- ETAP Beach Clean Up at Kayak Point – Sep 20
- Forage fish monitoring Picnic Point and Meadowdale – Sep 23
- Next MRC Meeting - Sep 17, virtual

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



Joycelyn, Becky, and Brie kayak monitoring the Edmonds Bull Kelp bed on Aug 7.

## MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

**County:** Whatcom

**Month/Year:** August 2025

**Submitted by:** Austin Rose and Dana Flerchinger

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

- The MRC completed kelp surveys at Aiston Preserve on August 8<sup>th</sup>, Cherry Point/Gulf Rd. and SW Lummi Island on August 9<sup>th</sup>, and Point Whitehorn on August 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- The MRC will be tabling at upcoming outreach events including Run with the Chums (part of Whatcom Water Week) on September 13<sup>th</sup> and Bellingham SeaFeast on September 27<sup>th</sup>.

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

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

- The August MRC meeting was held on the 7<sup>th</sup>. Highlights included:
  - The MRC will be tabling at upcoming outreach events including Run with the Chums (part of Whatcom Water Week) on September 13<sup>th</sup> and Bellingham SeaFeast on September 27<sup>th</sup>.
  - The MRC discussed the need for a committee chair. Mark Fairhart said he would consider the position, and the MRC will formally elect at the September meeting.
  - Council Climate Action and Natural Resources Committee was recently briefed on the [Future Shorelines Project – Climate Vulnerability Phase 2.](#) . It is a relevant body of work as the County continues to work on the Comprehensive Plan. There was a briefing on the [Climate Element](#) during the last Joint Council and Planning Commission.

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

- Beach Seine with Kids  
The MRC wrapped up efforts for the 2025 Beach Seine with Kids events in June.
- Intertidal Monitoring  
The MRC piloted intertidal monitoring at 2 sites within the Cherry Point Aquatic Reserve. Barnacle Rock was surveyed on June 12<sup>th</sup> with the help of 13 volunteers. Neptune Beach was surveyed on July 24<sup>th</sup> with the help of 11 volunteers. This work was previously conducted by RE Sources, who no longer has the funding to continue the program. An MRC subcommittee and staff have also been meeting to discuss the value of the data and how the monitoring plan could be adjusted to better reflect the interests of the MRC.
- HABs  
The HABs team has continued sampling weekly at Semiahmoo Marina and Birch Bay Village Marina. Samples were/will be collected on August 5<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 26<sup>th</sup>. A large spike in *Alexandrium* (associated with paralytic shellfish toxins - PST) was detected during sampling the week of August 12<sup>th</sup> and has persisted throughout the month. Birch Bay and Semiahmoo Spit are closed for recreational shellfish harvest due to PST biotoxins in these areas.

- Chuckanut PIC

In addition to regular monthly sampling, the MRC has continued to conduct microbial source tracking (MST) in North Chuckanut Bay at priority sites that have demonstrated consistently high fecal coliform levels over the past years. The goal of this additional sampling is to better determine the sources of contamination to inform the next steps for the project. The final MST samples were collected on August 6<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>, and results will be available in September. The MRC conducted the routine monthly sampling on August 13<sup>th</sup>.

- Forage Fish Surveys

The MRC conducted a forage fish survey at Little Squalicum Beach on August 25<sup>th</sup>.

- Bull Kelp Monitoring

The MRC surveyed Aiston Preserve on August 8<sup>th</sup>, Cherry Point/Gulf Rd. and SW Lummi Island on August 9<sup>th</sup>, and Point Whitehorn on August 22<sup>nd</sup>. The last survey at Cherry Point/Gulf Rd. is scheduled for Saturday, September 6<sup>th</sup>.

- Olympia Oyster Restoration

MRC staff have been working on the permits for Olympia oyster restoration efforts in Drayton Harbor. MRC staff also met with Julieta Martinelli, the Olympia oyster habitat biologist with WDFW, to discuss the potential of continued restoration efforts in North Chuckanut Bay. Julieta recommended continuing efforts at the most successful plots in North Chuckanut Bay by supplementing these locations with additional spat in 2026. Julieta mentioned that she may have access to additional North Sound spat in 2026 that the MRC could utilize to supplement these locations at no additional cost to the MRC. As such, MRC staff are also looking to renew the permits in North Chuckanut Bay.

**Other:**

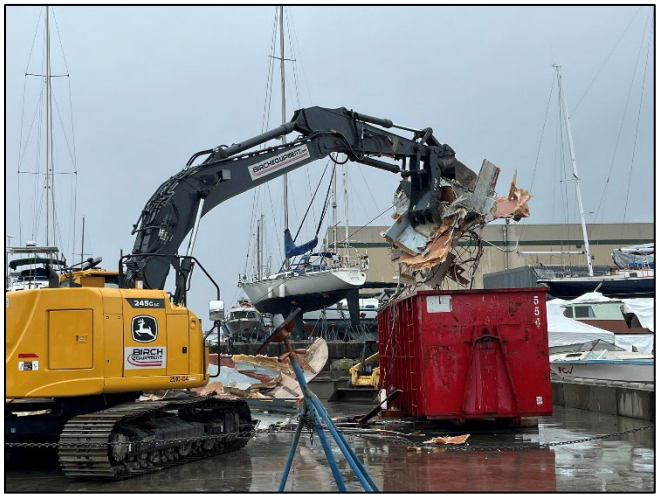
- Whatcom County Vessel Turn-In Event:

An on-site media day for the project team, media, and elected officials was held on August 6<sup>th</sup>. The Commissioner of Public Lands, Dave Upthegrove, as well as many of the project partners, shared information about the program and the importance of properly disposing of vessels before they become derelict. The group then viewed the deconstruction of a vessel on site. As of August 18<sup>th</sup>, 29 vessels have been accepted into the program, 19 vessels have been deconstructed, and 6 vessels are awaiting asbestos testing results.

- Eelgrass Protection in Wildcat Cove:

The Northwest Straits Foundation Interns have continued 2025 outreach efforts down at Wildcat Cove, with the goal of reducing launch user impacts to the surrounding eelgrass beds.

## Photos



MRC volunteers participate in kelp surveys at Aiston Preserve (upper left), Cherry Point/Gulf Rd. (top right), and Point Whitehorn (bottom left). Photo credits: Dana Flerchinger, MRC Staff. Bottom right: August 6<sup>th</sup> vessel turn-in event media day. Photo credit: Jessica Owens, NWSC Staff.