



Meeting: Northwest Straits Commission
Date: December 12, 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:

- September Meeting Minutes
- NWSC Rules of Procedure
- Draft MERIS letter of support

10:00 – 10:10 AM	Welcome and introductions Tribal acknowledgement September Meeting Minutes approval	Alan Clark, Chair
10:10 – 10:25 AM	Committee Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Executive Committee• External Relations Committee• Science Advisory Committee	Jamie Stephens Elsa Schwartz Emily Grason
10:25 – 10:50 AM	Business Items Conference Debrief 2026 NWSC Meeting Dates Reminder Retreat Planning Budget update Approve NWSC Rules of Procedure MERIS letter of support	Caitlyn Blair Caitlyn Blair Caitlyn Blair Sasha Horst Lucas Hart Lucas Hart
10:50 – 11:00 AM	Project Updates No-Anchor Zone Report Out	Jessica Owens



11:00 – 11:30 AM	MRC Reports	MRC Representatives
11:30 – 11:40 AM	Commissioner Updates (NW Indian Fisheries Commission, Puget Sound Partnership)	
11:50 – 12:00 PM	Public Comment and Partner Updates	
12:00 PM	Adjourn	

The next regularly scheduled NW Straits Commission meeting will be Friday, January 30, 2026, in person at Padilla Bay Reserve. Please see the [NWSC events page](#) for more information about our meetings.



Minutes

September 26, 2025, 10:30 AM- 3:00 PM
Northwest Straits Commission meeting

Attendees

Commission Members: Alan Clark (Clallam – Chair), Jamie Stephens (Vice Chair), Mike MacKay (Whatcom – Alternate), Elsa Schwartz, Lynne Wenberg (Skagit), Jeff Taylor (Jefferson), Emily Grason, Tim Ellis (Snohomish), Kirk Larsen (Island – Alternate)

Commission Staff: Jeff Whitty, Caitlyn Blair, Sasha Horst, Lucas Hart, Allie Simpson

Others in Attendance: Dr. Frances Robertson, Katherine Dietzman, Councilmember Jane Fuller, Sam Whitridge

Absent: Christina Koons (San Juan), Cecilia Gobin, Puget Sound Partnership representative

Welcome and Jackson Beach Site Visit

Commissioners arrived at Jackson Beach for the San Juan MRC site visit. Alan opened the meeting with the tribal acknowledgement.

Jackson Beach Restoration Site

Dr. Frances Robertson and Sam Whitridge presented on the removal of the creosote pilings at Jackson Beach. In 2023, the MRC received funding from the NW Straits Commission through NOAA and the Puget Sound Partnership's Nearshore Conservation Credit Program to remove the derelict creosote pilings of a former gravel production operation. The remaining piles were a significant source of contamination to the marine environment. The pilings were removed to improve water quality and conditions for eelgrass habitat, as well as to reduce toxins to forage fish and promote habitat for rearing juvenile salmon. For more information about this project, visit the project page on the [San Juan MRC website](#).

Reconvene

Jamie Stephens, vice chair, reconvened the Commission at the San Juan Grange to conduct the remainder of the meeting.

Remarks from San Juan County Councilmember Jane Fuller

Councilmember Jane Fuller shared remarks about her work in San Juan County and the County's role in establishing the first MRC, which became a model for the other NW Straits MRCs.

1 Boat, 2 Boat, 3 Boat, 4... Understanding Vessel Presence and Use in San Juan County

Dr. Frances Robertson presented the MRC's work conducting aerial surveys of areas that have high boater density in the San Juan Islands in order to monitor eelgrass beds. The results of the project will be used to compare areas of high vessel density with sensitive and culturally



Minutes

important marine habitats, such as eelgrass meadows, forage fish spawning habitats, and shellfish beds. For more information on this project, please visit the San Juan MRC eelgrass protection and vessel monitoring [webpage](#).

Approval of the NW Straits Commission August Meeting Minutes

The Commission approved the August meeting minutes by consensus.

MRC Reports

Clallam MRC – Alan Clark

- Chase O'Neil onboarded as the new MRC Project Coordinator and Habitat Biologist II for Clallam County.
Pinto abalone survey dives took place in mid-September in the Port Angeles subregion. Some abalone were found and one site was identified for potential out planting in the future.

Island MRC – Kirk Larsen

- Completion of three Hoypus Point and Cornet Bay stewardship events this summer.
- New interest by Island County community members in MRC participation!

Jefferson MRC – Jeff Taylor

- 2025 Wooden Boat Festival Marine Science and Stewardship Stage and tabling booth were a big success!
 - 1404 visitors over 3 days to the stage, and 285 visitors to the booth
 - 19 presentations, discussing puffins, pinto abalone, shellfish health, oyster restoration, kelp, impacts of the Elwha River dam removal, plankton and much more!
 - 3 days of a hands-on plankton microscope activity
 - Development of an MRC promo video, to show between presentations and at future tabling events
- Project leads submitted draft Summary Reports for SEANWS-2023 projects and are being finalized by the Coordinator.

San Juan MRC – Sam Whitridge

- The MRC has been advising San Juan County Council on the OPALCO Tidal Energy Pilot Proposal and is preparing a comment letter for County Council to submit prior to the Sept 30th deadline.
- San Juan MRC held interviews in early September for youth position to join the committee. The interview subcommittee plans to make a recommendation to the full MRC at our October meeting.



Minutes

- The Great Island Cleanup is scheduled for Saturday, October 4th.

Skagit MRC – Lynne Wenberg

- Nearshore assessment and Priorities (NEAP) Tool 'How-To' Video is now available on Sound IQ and the Skagit MRC website!
- Fidalgo Bay Day took place Saturday, September 13 at the Fidalgo Bay Resort in Anacortes.
- Salish Sea Stewards volunteer Jenn Dumas did an outstanding job coordinating the event this year. We estimated around 325 attendees, 11 businesses, 50 volunteers, 33 outreach booths, 28 passport stations, 162 passports distributed, and 106 passports completed. MRC member and City of Anacortes Council Member Carolyn Moulton and Coast Salish elder, Rosie Cayou James kicked off the event with a warm welcome. Event highlights included a beach seining demo, Shannon Point Marine Center touch tank, educational booths and passport stations, complimentary samples of seafood, kids craft activities, and Corra the Selkie.

Snohomish MRC – Tim Ellis

- A successful outreach event was held on September 10 at the Rose Hill Community Center in Mukilteo. Over 80 members of the public were in attendance and learned about kelp and eelgrass in their local communities.
- MRC members Phil Salditt and Julie Schlenger presented about the MRC and it's work to the Port of Edmonds on Sep 8.

Whatcom MRC – Mike MacKay

- The MRC will be tabling at upcoming outreach events including Run with the Chums (part of Whatcom Water Week) on September 13th and Bellingham SeaFeast on September 27th.
- There are two vacancies on the MRC, each representing a 'Recreational' Interest.
- Mark Fairhart has stepped up to be the MRC Chair.

Update from NW Straits Commission Director

Lucas Hart shared some highlights from the year, including completion of the NW Straits Commission strategic plan, the creation of a supporting implementation plan, strategic plan outreach materials, advancements in the federal NW Straits reauthorization bill, and completing a draft Ecology-NWSC MOU.

The Commission also created a fundraising guidance document for MRCs to consult when considering engaging in fundraising. The guidance will be shared with the NWS Foundation for



Minutes

awareness. It can also be used when working with other organizations or counties when considering joint-participation in events where funds will be solicited.

Lucas shared that the funding agreements with NOAA and EPA have been signed and contracts with counties are moving forward as originally planned.

Committee Updates

External Relations: The Committee met to discuss formalizing roles, strategies for federal and state funding, as well as how the Committee will assist in moving strategic plan actions forward. The Committee briefly touched on the draft Ecology/NW Straits Commission Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and possible invitations to elected officials to the annual conference.

Executive Committee: The Committee discussed the nominee for the Environmental Leadership award. This is the first year the Committee will serve as the nomination body for this award. The Committee also discussed adding the NW Straits Commission logo to the Orca Taskforce Website. They recommended this topic be brought to the Commission for discussion. Additionally, the Committee discussed the idea of creating talking points that describe how the Commission, MRCs, and Foundation work together, which will require further conversation.

Science Advisory Committee: Ron Thom will be stepping down from the Science Advisory Committee. The Committee appreciates his many years of service to the Commission and the Committee.

Business Items

Strategic Plan Launch: Staff shared a video by Jessica Owens about the strategic plan launch that was posted on NW Straits Commission social media pages.

Approval of the 2026 NWSC Meeting Dates: The Commission approved the 2026 meeting dates by consensus.

Conference: Reminders and Registration: The MRC Conference will be at Maple Hall in La Conner, Skagit County on November 7th and 8th. Registration for the annual conference closes on October 7th, please reach out to Caitlyn (info@nwstraits.org) if you are unsure if you registered, need the registration link, or have general questions about the conference. Additionally, if you are interested in submitting artwork for the digital art slideshow, please contact (info@nwstraits.org) or visit the [website](#).

NWSC Logo on Orca Taskforce Website: Jeff shared his discussion with Orca Recovery Coordinator, Tara Galuska, about utilizing the NW Straits Commission logo on the Orca Taskforce website. The Commission recognizes the importance of our support and discussed the development of a statement that clarifies our role in orca recovery. The Commission approved



Minutes

adding the logo to the orca task force website with the caveat that a statement be written to describe our role in orca recovery.

Project Updates

Kayak Monitoring: Jeff shared that MRC volunteer kayakers completed all bull kelp surveys for 2025. A big thank you goes out to all their hard work. Staff have been busy working to prepare MRC data for partners to include in the WA Floating Kelp Indicator and other research.

European Green Crab: Land-based trapping efforts in Samish Bay and Drayton Harbor have ended for the season. Staff are collaborating with WA Dept. of Natural Resources and WA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife to conduct boat-based trapping efforts in Samish Bay and Drayton Harbor. Staff participated in Fidalgo Bay Day, hosting a green crab focused booth highlighting how to identify green crabs and best public reporting mechanisms.

No-Anchor Zone and Anchor Out Campaign: NW Straits Commission staff are working with partners in Washington and British Columbia to create a map that indicates high-priority areas for anchoring out of eelgrass. For more information visit anchorout.org.

Communications Plan Overview

Staff shared that the communications plan is due for an update, and Jessica is working to convene an ad hoc committee or workgroup that will review the existing communications plan, align communications with the strategic plan, and provide recommendations for an updated communications plan.

The Commission discussed three questions:

- How will improved communications help us meet goals or address gaps?
- What does success look like (outcomes, priorities, impact)?
- What type of feedback does the Commission need to feel confident the process is moving in the right direction with the ad hoc committee?

NW Straits Commissioner Updates

Sasha recently talked with Jason Lim and shared that the application period has closed for the Puget Sound Partnership's Executive Director position. A panel is reviewing applications.



Commission staff highlights - [October 2025]

MRC Support

MRC Grants: The MRC grants funded by EPA/Puget Sound Partnership-State were executed and have an October 1 start date. NOAA-funded agreements for 2025-27 are now being prepared and expected to be finalized in November.

The 2023-25 grant agreements funded by EPA/Puget Sound Partnership-State funds ended September 30 are now closed. The 2023-25 NOAA-funded agreements end on December 31, 2025. Final reporting is due by the end date.

MRC Meeting Attendance

- San Juan MRC (10/2) - Jeff
- Whatcom MRC (10/2) - Lucas
- Snohomish MRC Retreat (10/15) - Lucas

Regional Projects

Kelp Plan: NWS Commission staff met with the Kelp Plan Coordination Advisory Committee to discuss upcoming developments to advance the Kelp Plan, including building relationships and linkages with cross-taxa partners and improving awareness of funding opportunities for WA kelp conservation. Staff also attended several workshops with local and transboundary groups to support efforts undertaking Kelp Plan actions and continue to build cross-taxa partnerships.

Kelp Monitoring: The field season for kayakers wrapped up in September and NWS Commission staff began processing the data in October. NWSC staff met with representatives from each MRC volunteer group, county staff, and a member from the Science Advisory Committee to review what the kayakers saw this year and to discuss topics of interest including the effects of tides and currents on kelp beds. NWSC staff presented on kelp and kelp monitoring to the Milltown Sailing Association in Edmonds. Jeff facilitated the Kelp Plan Coordination Advisory Committee meeting on 10/14. Jeff, Leah and Suzanne attended the MRC Kelp Monitoring Workgroup on 10/15.

Forage Fish: NWSC hosted an MRC forage fish training event taught by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. Thirty trainees that volunteer with multiple MRCs learned about the life history of forage fish and their importance to the marine food web in the Salish Sea and practiced their surveying skills on the beach at Bay View State Park. Jeff attended the PSEMP Forage Fish and Salmon Workgroup on 10/16.



Commission staff highlights - [October 2025]

European Green Crab: The field season in Samish Bay and Drayton Harbor wrapped up in October with boat-based trapping efforts led by partners from WDFW and DNR. Capture rates in Samish Bay were particularly high due to trapping in areas via the airboat that have been difficult to access by land in the past. This was the second year in a row with high EGC recruitment in both waterbodies. The captures throughout the year were dominated by Y1 crabs and Young-of-the-Year starting in August.

Voluntary No-Anchor Zones: NWSC continued to monitor vessels in Fidalgo Bay and compile vessels recorded by partners in Whatcom and San Juan Counties. Compiling data for Anchor Out of Eelgrass campaign year-end reporting.

Derelict Vessels: NWSC worked with WDNR and Ecology to compile final numbers from the Whatcom derelict vessel turn in event press release.

SoundIQ Staff are in the process of information gathering and planning for an information/education campaign around the new SoundIQ launch to increase general awareness and use.

Operations

Staff: No changes to staffing during this period. Dana remains on leave through December and will return part time in January.

Budget: Commission staff are conducting a budget review and anticipate having funding available in 2026 to redistribute. The Commission will be presented with a strategy for redistribution and amounts in January. MRCs can begin thinking about possible projects/funding needs and will be asked to submit ideas in February. This is an optional opportunity.

Communications: Staff are working on collecting MRC/Commission program reports, data, images for 2025 Impact Report. Staff began moving to a website platform (Drupal) with WATech. The website design will be similar with a few new features. Launch is expected mid/end-December.

Contracts and grants: The contract with Fidalgo Paddlesports for kayak training for kelp monitoring volunteers was amended to extend through the 2026 season. The interagency agreement with WA Department of Natural Resources for derelict vessel removal and vessel turn-in events was completed and closed. A new agreement for 2026 is in process.

Broad Community Engagement: NWSC and MRC staff met to discuss inclusive hiring and onboarding practices and volunteer recruitment.



Commission staff highlights - [October 2025]

Other Meetings Attended

- Shorelands and Environmental Assistance Program Management Team – 10/6, 10/13, 10/20 Lucas
- Kelp Node Transboundary Group – 10/7 Jeff
- WWU/Salish Sea Institute “Hope for the Salish Sea Workshop” – 10/8 Lucas, Jessica, Caitlyn
- WA Seaweed Collaborative Meeting – 10/10 Jeff
- WA Kelp Research and Monitoring Workgroup – 10/22 Jeff presented



Commission staff highlights - [November 2025]

MRC Support

MRC Grants NOAA-funded agreements for 2025-27 are now routing for signature and have a January 1, 2026 start date. The 2023-25 NOAA-funded grants are now in the final month, with all deliverables due by the end date of December 31, 2025.

Regional Projects

Kelp Plan: Staff worked closely with Tribes, community groups, non-profits, and state agencies to advance three different projects involving kelp monitoring, social science, and recovery.

Kelp Monitoring: NWSC staff continued to process 2025 kelp monitoring data, which included meeting with MRC kayak team leads to review and quality check the processed data.

Forage Fish: NWSC delivered samples from MRCs and connected with WDFW about processing. They are currently back-logged on processing but will continue to communicate with MRC project leads on the results as they work through them.

European Green Crab: Staff began the end-of-season trapping data wrap-up in preparation for the Trappers' Summit hosted by WA Sea Grant. This event is an opportunity for NWS Commission to share out the collaborative effort in Samish Bay and Drayton Harbor with trapping partners across the State.

Voluntary No-Anchor Zones: Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and NWS Commission finalized a Memorandum of Understanding formalizing a partnership and procedure for establishing virtual voluntary no-anchor zones for eelgrass protection that overlap with DNR managed state-owned aquatic lands.

Derelict Vessels: No update.

SoundIQ: Staff are in the process of information gathering and planning for an information/education campaign around the new SoundIQ launch to increase general awareness and use.

Operations

Staff: Allie will be on extended leave until further notice. Dana remains on leave through December and will return part time in January.

Budget The 2023-25 EPA funding via the Puget Sound Partnership ends on December 31, 2025. The impact report is the final deliverable due to close the agreement.



Commission staff highlights - [November 2025]

Communications: Staff are working on collecting MRC/Commission program reports, data, images for 2025 Impact Report. Staff began moving to a website platform (Drupal) with WATech. The website design will be similar with a few new features. Launch is expected mid/end-December.

Contracts and grants A new interagency agreement with WA Department of Natural Resources for derelict vessel removal/vessel turn-in events is in process. The agreement will go through 2027.

Broad Community Engagement: NWSC staff attended the workshop on November 19 "Gathering in HOPE" led by WWU Center for Community Learning and WhiteSwan Environmental. The gathering hosted individuals across the Salish Sea region and beyond, coming together to address local social and environmental issues.

Other Meetings Attended

- Puget Sound Partnership Ecosystem Coordination Board Meeting 11/5 (Lucas)
- SEA Program Management Team Meeting 11/10, 11/17 (Lucas)
- Squaxin Island kelp bed knowledge exchange 11/13 (Jeff)
- Jefferson MRC Executive Committee sub-group meeting 11/18 (Lucas)
- Gathering in Hope 11/19 (Lucas, Sasha, Jeff, Caitlyn, Jessica)
- ESRP Learning Program Webinar Series: Impact of Small Overwater Structures to Salmon and Kelp
- Puget Sound Day on the Sound 11/24 (Lucas)

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Clallam

Month/Year: October 2025

Submitted by: Amelia Kalagher

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

- The final pinto abalone survey dives for the 2025 season took place in the Port Angeles subregion. Multiple abalone were found!
- The MRC hosted educational tables at Forever Streamfest on September 20th, and Dungeness Riverfest on September 26th.
- The MRC's stewardship of Elwha Beach – Sanikan, dog waste receptacle, and dog waste bags – is funded through September 2027 by a grant received from the North Olympic Development Council in September 2025.

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):

- The MRC hosted educational tables at Forever Streamfest on September 20th, and Dungeness Riverfest on September 26th.
- Pinto abalone survey dives took place between September 22nd-25th and October 21st-22nd.
- The MRC held its regular monthly meeting on Monday, October 20th.

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

- The MRC's stewardship of Elwha Beach – Sanikan, dog waste receptacle, and dog waste bags – is funded through September 2027 by a grant received from the North Olympic Development Council in September 2025.

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 2025. The next annual population monitoring will likely be scheduled for late spring 2026.
- *Forage fish*: Forage fish sampling continues at Elwha Beach, Cline Spit and Ediz Hook.
- *Pinto abalone*: Final pinto abalone survey dives for 2025 took place in late September and October in the Port Angeles subregion. Multiple abalone were found.
- *Kelp monitoring*: The kelp monitoring team has completed a survey of all three beds for the 2025 season, with beds showing promising size and density comparable to previous years. Planning for the 2026 season will commence in winter/spring.
- *Pigeon guillemots*: Pigeon guillemot monitoring for summer 2025 concluded in September.
- *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.

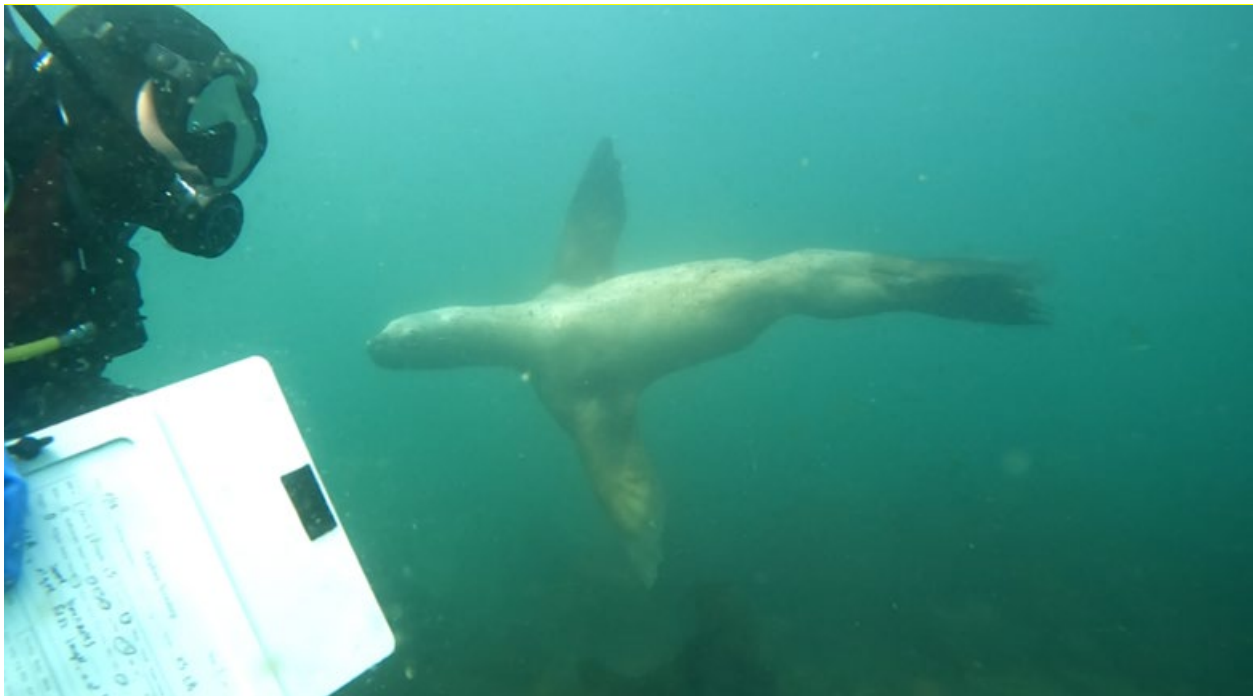
- *Education – displays:* MRC members continued developing new displays for outreach at local festivals. This effort was discussed at the October monthly meeting, with an intent to emphasize interactive kid-friendly display development.
- *Education – oil spill response:* The HAZWOPER refresher and oiled wildlife training was offered in April 2025. The next round of training will likely be planned for spring 2026.
- *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, which funds the stewardship project through September 2027. MRC alternate Dann May will be filling the dog bag dispenser twice monthly.

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's advisory subcommittee has reconvened. In October the subcommittee sent the Board of County Commissioners a letter including an open invitation for dialogue/meetings. The subcommittee is working on a memo to the Commissioners detailing the MRC's priority concerns for marine resources.

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

All pictures below from September and October survey dives for pinto abalone. Credit to Puget Sound Restoration Fund.







MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Clallam

Month/Year: November 2025

Submitted by: Amelia Kalagher

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

- Five members and two staff attended the Northwest Straits Commission's annual conference on November 7th and 8th.
- At the regular monthly meeting November 17th, Clallam County Director of Community Development Bruce Emery presented on the County Comprehensive Plan update.

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):

- Five members and two staff attended the Northwest Straits Commission's annual conference on November 7th and 8th.
- The MRC held its regular monthly meeting on Monday, November 17th, with a presentation from Clallam County Director of Community Development Bruce Emery on the County Comprehensive Plan update.

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 oysters*: Olympia oyster populations at the Sequim Bay restoration site were surveyed in May 2025. The next annual population monitoring will likely be scheduled for late spring 2026.
- *Forage fish*: Forage fish sampling continues at Elwha Beach, Cline Spit and Ediz Hook. Tim Cochnauer (former MRC member, soon to rejoin as a member) and Stephen Crafton-Tempel (new forage fish monitoring volunteer) joined the team.
- *Pinto abalone*: Final pinto abalone survey dives for 2025 took place in late September and October in the Port Angeles subregion. Multiple abalone were found.
- *Kelp monitoring*: Kelp monitoring for summer 2025 concluded in September. Planning for the 2026 kelp monitoring season will commence in winter/spring.
- *Pigeon guillemots*: Pigeon guillemot monitoring for summer 2025 concluded in September. Planning for the 2026 pigeon guillemot monitoring season will commence in winter/spring.
- *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 2025. The next round of training will likely be planned for spring 2026.
- *Elwha Beach*: Clallam MRC continued to steward the beach at the mouth of the Elwha River, with sponsorship of a Sanikan and dog waste bin through a North Olympic Development Council grant and MRC alternate Dann May replenishing the dog waste bags.

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.

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Island

Month/Year: October / 2025

Submitted by: Elise Adams

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

- Island MRC and Northwest Straits Foundation hosted a native planting event in celebration of Orca Recovery Day!
- The MRC's forage fish monitoring team educated members of the public about the restoration work and forage fish monitoring at the restored Keystone Farm and Forest Preserve on Orca Recovery Day! It was an Orca Recovery-filled month for Island MRC!

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:

- Oct 7: MRC Monthly Meeting
- Oct 16: Orca Recovery Day planting event at Hoypus Point and Cornet Bay
- Oct 18: Orca Recovery Day at Keystone Farm and Forest Preserve

Upcoming Meetings/Events:

- Nov 4: MRC Monthly Meeting
- Nov 7-8: NWSC MRC Conference
- Dec 2: MRC Monthly Meeting

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):

Island County and DEI:

- The Island County Board of County Commissioners will be hearing from the DEI consultant on November 5th regarding their report and deciding how to move forward in regard to DEI on Island County committees. This report will help the IC MRC in the search for new applicants for the next year.

Monitoring – Forage Fish:

- We have continued our year-round monitoring for forage fish eggs with teams conducting monthly monitoring at our Whidbey Island and Camano Island sites.

Education & Outreach/Forage Fish:

- IC MRC partnered with the Whidbey Island Conservation District and other Island County partners to support their Orca Recovery Day event at Keystone Farm and Forest Preserve. Kirk Larsen, forage fish project lead, lead an educational talk along Keystone's bluffs about site's restoration process and the role that forage fish play in salmon recovery.

Stewardship – Cornet Bay/Hoypus Point:

- On Thursday, October 16th, Island County MRC joined Northwest Straits Foundation in hosting a volunteer planting event in honor of Orca Recovery Day. Volunteers met at Hoypus Point and Cornet Bay to plant native vegetation at both restoration sites to support shoreline health and Salish Sea orca recovery.

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



Orca Recovery Day native
vegetation planting

Photo by Elise Adams



Orca Recovery Day
volunteers

Photo by Elise Adams



Volunteers sample for forage fish eggs and enjoy a beautiful sampling walk at Keystone Farm

Photo by Elise Adams



Forage fish lead, Kirk Larsen, educates Orca Recovery Day attendees at Keystone Farm

Photo by Elise Adams

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Island

Month/Year: November / 2025

Submitted by: Elise Adams

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

- Many Island MRC members attended the NWSC Conference where they were able to educate and inform other MRCs on their Shoreline Armoring Analysis and Report!

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):

Previous Meetings/Events:

- Nov 4: MRC Monthly Meeting
- Nov 7-8: NWSC Conference

Upcoming Meetings/Events:

- Dec 2: MRC Monthly Meeting
- Dec 8: Education and Outreach – Plankton Day at South Whidbey Schools

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):

Island County and DEI:

- The Island County Board of County Commissioners heard the DEI consultant's report on November 12th. This report helps inform Island County's Commissioners on DEI needs moving forward for the County's Boards and Committees. Island County Commissioners will continue the conversation on Tuesday, December 2nd when they discuss term-limits for county volunteers.

Monitoring – Forage Fish:

- We have continued our year-round monitoring for forage fish eggs with teams conducting monthly monitoring at our Whidbey Island and Camano Island sites.

NWSC MRC Conference on Nov 7-8 at Maple Hall in La Conner:

- Many members of the Island County MRC, including Department of Natural Resources Manager, Jen Schmitz, and Island County Commissioner, Melanie Bacon, attended the 2025 MRC Conference hosted by the NWSC. IC members attended the conference to learn more about the work of their fellow counties, hear from a diverse array of speakers and educators, and share about their recent Shoreline Armoring Analysis and Report. The Island County MRC left the conference feeling motivated, inspired, and looking forward to using what they gained at the conference in the MRCs community projects moving forward!

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



The Island County MRC participates in the round-robin activity, sharing the results of their recent shoreline armoring report.

Photo by Elise Adams



Island County MRC member, Andi Kopit, presents on the restoration work at Keystone Farm and Preserve.

Photo by Elise Adams

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Jefferson

Month/Year: October 2025

Submitted by: Katie Kowal

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

- 2 MRC members (Neil and Betsy) joined County Commissioner Heidi Eisenhour for the biweekly 'County Connections' radio program on KPTZ. They discussed the MRC mission and several projects, including Olympia Oysters and Wooden Boat Festival. There are plans to attend future programs to continue to share information about the MRC, and delve into topics such as derelict vessels.
- New MRC member appointed – Steve King, City of Port Townsend representative

- **Membership/Leadership changes** (new/departing members, changes to chair/vice-chair, NWSC representative/alternate, staff): Tim Behrenfeld was appointed as District 1 Rep (formerly District 1 Alternate) and Steve King was appointed as City of Port Townsend Rep.

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

Past Events/Meetings

October 7 - MRC Monthly Meeting

October 8 – Forage Fish Training

October 21 – MRC Executive Committee Meeting

October 21 – Forage fish monitoring (Dabob and Quilcene)

October 30 – Shoreline Landowner Outreach, Quilcene Marina bulkhead removal meeting with NWSF

Upcoming Events/Meetings

November 4 - MRC Monthly Meeting

November 7-8 – MRC Conference

November 10 – NWSC Jefferson MRC Kelp data review meeting

November 18 – MRC Executive Committee Meeting

December 8 – NWSF Shoreline Friendly Workshop

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):

- Monitoring:
 - **Forage fish - Dabob Bay (Index):** Sarah Fisker sampled Dabob Bay October 21. 2 MRC members attended the MRC Forage Fish training on October 8.
 - **Forage fish – Quilcene Marina:** Sarah Fisker sampled Quilcene Marina October 21.

- **Shoreline Landowner:** Shore Friendly workshop planned for December 8. Project lead met with Lisa Kaufman of NWSF at the Quilcene Marina, to discuss possibilities for removal of a bulkhead and beach nourishment/restoration.
- **Kelp kayak monitoring:** Project lead uploaded data to Kobo toolbox.
- **Storm surge monitoring:** Team is considering adding a new site (North Beach).
- Rain Gardens:
 - Project lead has contracted a gardener to provide maintenance to several rain gardens through the end of the year, primarily focused on thistle removal.
 - Plantings in Quilcene rain garden seem to be failing, possibly due to low rainfall/lack of water. Project lead is determining how to proceed (replant with drought tolerant species, etc.).
- Education & Outreach:
 - 2 MRC members (Neil and Betsy) joined County Commissioner Heidi Eisenhour for the biweekly 'County Connections' radio program on KPTZ. They discussed the MRC mission and several projects, including Olympia Oysters and Wooden Boat Festival. There are plans to attend future programs to continue to share information about the MRC, and delve into topics such as derelict vessels.
- Olympia Oysters:
 - Nothing to report.
- Voluntary No-Anchor Zones:
 - Team visually checked the buoys at Mystery Bay.
 - WA DNR Right of Entry permit review is almost finalized, expected to receive in November 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.):

The MRC was asked by DNR to write a Letter of Recommendation in support of the Dabob Bay Natural Area - Trust Land Transfer. Peter Bahls of the Northwest Watershed Institute will speak at the November 4 MRC meeting to provide context on the land transfer and conservation history of Dabob Bay.

Photos (photos of recent projects or members—include project, photo credit and additional info): All photos taken by Katie Kowal unless otherwise noted.

No photos to share from October.

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Jefferson

Month/Year: November 2025

Submitted by: Katie Kowal

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

- Ad-hoc subcommittee is drafting an advisory letter to the BOCC in support of DNR's Dabob Bay Natural Area Land Trust transfer.
- Akeyla Behrenfeld resigned as the Youth Local representative.

- **Membership/Leadership changes** (new/departing members, changes to chair/vice-chair, NWSC representative/alternate, staff): Akeyla Behrenfeld resigned as the Youth Local representative.

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

Past Events/Meetings

November 4 - MRC Monthly Meeting

November 7-8 – MRC Conference

November 10 – NWSC Jefferson MRC Kelp data review meeting

November 18 – MRC Executive Committee Meeting

Upcoming Events/Meetings

December 2 - MRC Monthly Meeting

December 8 – NWSF Shoreline Friendly Workshop

December 16 – MRC Executive Committee Meeting

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):

- Monitoring:
 - **Forage fish - Dabob Bay (Index):** Sarah Fisker will sample Dabob Bay late November.
 - **Forage fish – Quilcene Marina:** Sarah Fisker will sample Quilcene Marina late November.
 - **Forage fish – Fort Worden:** Coordinator reached out to NWSC staff to discuss potential for adding this sampling site in 2026. Details of WDFW availability and project scope are in process.
 - **Shoreline Landowner:** Shore Friendly workshop planned for December 8 at the Port Hadlock Library.
 - **Kelp kayak monitoring:** Nothing to report.

- Rain Gardens:
 - Project lead has contracted a gardener to provide maintenance to several rain gardens through the end of the year, primarily focused on thistle removal.
- Education & Outreach:
 - Nothing to report.
- Olympia Oysters:
 - Nothing to report.
- Voluntary No-Anchor Zones:
 - NAZ team is working to find a good low tide during daylight to swap summer and winter buoys at the Port Townsend Waterfront.

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 was asked by DNR to write a Letter of Recommendation in support of the Dabob Bay Natural Area - Trust Land Transfer. An ad-hoc subcommittee formed at the November monthly meeting and will draft a letter for review by the MRC at the December meeting.

Photos (photos of recent projects or members—include project, photo credit and additional info): All photos taken by Katie Kowal unless otherwise noted.



Photo: Jefferson MRC members at the 2025 NWSC conference.

– 11/8/25, La Connor, WA

Photo Credit: Unknown (working on tracking this info down)

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: San Juan County

Month/Year: October 2025

Submitted by: Sam Whitridge & Katie Johnson

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

- The MRC has two new youth members, Lola Walker and Flora Vaught will be joining the MRC, representing the voices of young people within the Islands and working together to progress MRC projects.
- The Fall Great Islands Cleanup was a great success with 137 volunteers helping to clean up 1,300 lbs. of litter from beaches and roadways from Lopez, Orcas, Shaw and San Juan Island.
- On Orca Recovery Day at the MRC joined forces with other whale research and conservation organizations to bring the 2025 distance regulations to life by having folks dash or walk the 1,000 yard distance (roughly ½ mile). This event brought together many of the local whale groups and was a fun way to raise awareness.

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

At the October 21 County Council Meeting, Lola Walker of Orcas Island and Flora Vaught of San Juan Island were approved as youth members to join the committee. We look forward to welcoming them at our November meeting.

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

- September 26th- NWSC Meeting in Friday Harbor
- September 27 – Kelp Soiree at the SJI Art Museum
- October 2nd- Regular MRC Meeting
- October 4th- Fall Great Islands Cleanup
- October 18th – Orca Recovery Day
- November 6th – Next MRC Meeting
- November 7-8th – NWSC/MRC Conference

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 Fall Great Islands Cleanup was a great success. Thanks to 137 volunteers across Lopez Shaw, Orcas, and San Juan Island over 1,300 pounds of litter was collected. Of the materials collected 50 lbs. of recyclables was separated out and appropriately disposed of. Everything from nurdles to small plastics, and large Styrofoam pieces was removed from public beaches. A huge thanks to our collaborators across the county for making this possible including ORS/ the Exchange, Lopez Solid Waste disposal district, San Juan Sanitation, Friends of the San Juans, the Stewardship Network of the San Juans, and numerous individual, business, and service group volunteers. This year marks the 14th year of great islands cleanups and we look forward to continuing this beloved tradition.

On October 18th, the MRC helped to host an Orca Recovery Day event in conjunction with fellow orca research and conservation organizations including Orca Network, The Whale Museum, Seadoc Society, Killer Whale Tails, SR3 –Sealife Response, Rehab & Research, and the San Juan Island Conservation District. In order to raise awareness about the new distance regulations beginning in 2025 participants came and dashed the distance/walked for Whales 1,000 yards. It can be really difficult to discern that distance, especially on the water. By having people dash or walk 1,000 yards it brings that distance to life. Coffee and doughnuts were generously sponsored by Riptide Cafe and San Juan Safaris. After the fun run organizations tabled to share about their whale research and conservation efforts. The MRC passed out whale warning flags played whale trivia. It was a wonderful day working with fellow organizations for the southern resident killer whale recovery.

Derelict Vessel marine patrols have started back up. Our marine patrols are multifaceted: we check on vessels of concern, follow up on problematic vessels, as well as continue monitoring mooring buoys and replacing outdated Be Whale Wise signage. On a recent patrol, intern Sonora Tate captured footage for several short videos explaining the use of the whale warning flags, new distance regulations, and the Westside voluntary no-go zone.

The DV team has been busy following up on boats adrift and boats to be taken into temporary custody. One particularly slippery character, well-known to the DV program and notorious for taking “unwanted” boats, recently had his vessel seized under temporary custody and towed to the port. The owner proceeded to steal an outboard engine, sneak onto the property and “free” the vessel, fleeing into the open sea. The Sheriff’s office had to follow up, and both the owner and vessel are now secured, while the boat waits to be dismantled. Windy weather has caused vessels on the watch list to drift, heading towards the dock at Friday Harbor Labs. Thanks to quick response from lab staff, the sheriff and DV team were activated and the vessel owner returned to secure the boat, which now rests in a shipyard in Anacortes.

In late September the MRC co-hosted an evening soiree at the San Juan Islands Museum of Art. The evening was a celebration of kelp and seagrass for conservation and protection. MRC member Olivia Graham spoke on behalf of the MRC about our work to protect these vital habitats and resources. It was a fun filled evening to celebrate kelp in its many forms from food and drink to art and culture.

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 Northwest Straits Commission held their monthly meeting in the Friday Harbor on September 26. Marine program staff and MRC members met the commissioners at Jackson Beach to showcase a restoration project. This project included the removal of 132 creosote pilings that once made up a dock. County Council, Jane Fuller welcomed the commissioners and help set the scene for what we experience in the islands. Later in the meeting Frances Robertson presented to the Commission about the ongoing vessel survey data work. Assessing vessel density in relation to sensitive habitats continues to be a high priority for the MRC.

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





Great Islands Cleanup Photos – San Juan Island. Photos by Sonora Tate.



Great Island Cleanup Photos – Orcas Island. Photos by ORS/The Exchange.



Olivia Graham, MRC member and seagrass research fellow, speaks at the Kelp Soiree. Photos by Kari Koski



L - Pod of mini runners at Orca Recovery Day, preparing to Dash the Distance. Photo by Katie Johnson
R – Whale Conservation and research leaders within the San Juans. Photo by Deborah Giles



Dash the Distance – Orca Recovery Day. Whales watching whales and bringing 1,000 yards to life. Photos by Kari Koski



Marine Patrol at Prevost Harbor. Photo by Katie Johnson.



Tagging a vessel of concern. Photo by Sonora Tate.



L – Shoving offshore Stuart Island. Photo by Sonora Tate



R - Marine Program Staff, Katie and Frankie, pause while on patrol. Photo by Frances Robertson

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: San Juan County

Month/Year: November 2025

Submitted by: Sam Whitridge & Katie Johnson

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

- Two youth members have begun working with the MRC. Lola Walker and Flora Vaught have joined the MRC as youth representatives, and we are thrilled to hear their voices.
- MRC members and staff attended the Northwest Straits Commission annual conference in November in LaConner. It is always a wonderful event to connect with MRC members across the region and hear inspiring stories, ideas and collaborations.
- Derelict Vessel prevention efforts are underway Through recently produced video about winterizing your vessel as well as a poster campaign for end of life planning for your boat.

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

November was the first meeting or two new youth representatives, Lola Walker and Flora Vaught. The MRC is thrilled to welcome new voices that represent a different demographic.

Lola Walker is a Senior at Orcas Island High School and moved to Orcas in 2015. After falling in love with nature at a young age and working with COMPASS last spring gathering community input on the new climate section of San Juan County's comprehensive plan, Lola has a newfound drive for climate activism. Growing up sailing, Lola appreciates and wants to help protect the marine environment surrounding the islands. She is excited to work with the MRC to provide a youth perspective on marine issues, as well as expanding community participation in the fight against climate change.

Flora Vaught moved to San Juan Island with her family in 2016. She has long had a connection with the ocean, visiting the beaches of Friday Harbor on trips to her grandparents since she was four. She is now a senior at Friday Harbor High School. Flora participated in Salish Sea Sciences and was the recipient of the Youth Investigator prize, earning the opportunity to intern in Dr. Emily Carrington's lab. She has also been involved with several research projects at UW Friday Harbor Labs, presenting at conferences for the past two years. Flora is eager to give back to the community and environment that raised her.

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

- November 3rd – MRC Retreat Planning
- November 6th – Next MRC Meeting
- November 7-8th – NWSC/MRC Conference
- November 3rd – MRC Retreat Planning
- November 25th – PFSS Subcommittee Meeting
- December 4th – MRC Retreat

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):

With winter drawing near, a campaign to help boaters *batten down the hatches* is underway. The final project of our intern, Sonora Tate, was to develop a video describing simple actions one can take to winterize your vessel. Check it out on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W7MfVrKaeM>. One of the key messages in this video pertains to the quote think before you shrink quote campaign, which tries to discourage voters from shrink wrapping their boats for the winter period this plastic is typically a single use and the sheer volume of it is equivalent to roughly 2000 plastic grocery bags.

Derelict vessel patrols have been ongoing throughout the fall as stormy weather causes many boating events. These p These patrols happen on both land by walking through various arenas and by boat driving around the county to check on

known and distant places. We are currently monitoring about a dozen vessels and six vessels of concern. In the past month at least three vessels have been removed from county waters. Gary Koski, they're like Russell coordinator has been in contact with and following up with lasso of concern and what vessel owners, several have remedied problems or are working on it. We are also embarking on a poster campaign for end-of-life planning for your boat, stay tuned!

The MRC's ongoing efforts towards the Marine Stewardship Area made a significant move by formal adaptation of the 2024 Report by the San Juan County council to replace the previous 2007 MSA plan. County staff, Francis Robertson, presented to the council about the efforts the MRC has put into creating an updated and comprehensive report regarding the state of the marine stewardship area. This report is a compilation of many years' efforts by past and present MRC members, state agencies, scientists and local experts. It is rewarding to see this resolution adopted by County Council and the MSA Report to be used as a resource of best available science throughout San Juan County.

Efforts this month have gone into planning the annual MRC retreat in lieu of our regular December meeting. The MRC will be retreating at the UW Friday Harbor Labs on December 4. The agenda is in draft form. Plans are underway to draft a workplan for 2026, review subcommittee activities, and celebrate the wins from 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.):

MRC members Christina Koons, Lovel Pratt, Adam Parrott, Dave Checkley, and county staff Francis Robertson, Sam Whitridge, and Katie Johnson attended the MRC Conference in early November. It was a great chance to connect with fellow MRCs across the region, to discuss important and ongoing work, and hear inspiring messages from our legislators. The San Juan MRC presented in the networking session about our vessel survey work. By assessing recreational vessel density across the San Juans during peak boating season, we can determine where there are hot spots of vessel activity. Overlaying these results with resource maps can help us infer and manage relative impacts to sensitive marine habitats and resources. It was nice to get feedback and have dialogue with other MRCs about this work.

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



L: Lola Walker, Youth Representative to the MRC from Orcas Island. Photo courtesy of Lola Walker.

R: Flora Vaught, Youth Representative to the MRC from San Juan Island. Photo courtesy of Flora Vaught.



Jamie Stephens, Debra Lekanoff, Frances Robertson, and Katie Johnson at the NWSC Conference. Debra Lekanoff's speech at the NWSC Conference was inspirational and heartfelt. Photos by Frances Robertson

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Skagit

Month/Year: Oct/2025

Submitted by: Tracy/Lynne

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

- **Bowman Bay Plant Maintenance:** Oct 15 Fall Planting Event at Bowman Bay with the Northwest Straits Foundation as part of Orca Recovery Week. 10 volunteers, 31 volunteer hours, 4 NWSF staff, and 2 employees from the PNW Trail Association. Planted 66 native plants including: Hooker Willow, Snowberry, Douglas Spirea, and Nootka Rose. This was the last stewardship event of the year at Bowman Bay.
- **Kids on the Beach** – Oct 23 at the Fidalgo Bay resort. 43 eighth grade students from Conway Middle School participated in beach seining and forage fish surveys with the help of 6 Samish DNR staff and 25 volunteers. The Samish DNR staff are amazing! They let us borrow their seining equipment and helped conduct 5 different seines along Fidalgo Bay. Students were more engaged than ever. We caught numerous fish as well as three hooded nudibranchs that smelled like melon, and the kids had a blast taking turns smelling them. Lots of surf smelt eggs were also found along the beach and the students were very excited to see the eggs about to hatch under the microscopes. The [2025 Kids on the Beach Report](#) has been completed and is now available on the MRC website.

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):

- **Oct 2- Salish Sea Stewards Training Work Group Meeting** at Padilla Bay
- **Oct 4 & 5- Festival of Family Farms-** Taylor Shellfish, Bow. MRC tabled at the event
- **Oct 7- NEAP Check-in meeting** with Confluence
- **Oct 9- Monthly MRC Meeting** via Teams 9am-11am. Lisa Kaufman presented an update on the Clayton Beach Restoration project and other NWSF projects happening in Skagit County
- **Oct 15- Bowman Bay Fall Planting Event**
- **Oct 15- Kelp Monitoring Workgroup Meeting**
- **Oct 16- Salish Sea Stewards Fall Social-** Northern State Recreation Area with Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group presentation. Lucy DeGrace with Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group presented the history of the park and the importance of Hansen Creek for salmon and local wildlife. Around 20 Salish Sea Stewards alumni participated
- **Oct 23- Kids on the Beach** with Conway 8th Grade at Fidalgo Bay
- **Nov 6- Salish Sea Stewards Training Work Group Meeting-** 2:30pm, Zoom
- **Nov 7 & 8- MRC Conference** at Maple Hall, La Conner
- **Nov 10- Derelict Crab Pot Removal Planning Meeting-** 1pm, Zoom with NWSF
- **Nov 13- Monthly MRC Meeting** cancelled due to the MRC Conference just one week before
- **Nov 17- Skagit MRC Kelp Monitoring Data Review Meeting** with NWSC- 11am Teams

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:

- On October 2nd the Salish Sea Stewards Training Working Group had the first meeting of the 2025 - 2026 Training Season. The meeting was in-person in the Steven's Center at Padilla Bay NERR. Meetings will be held on the first Thursday of the month at 2:30.
 - The SSS Training Working Group consists of the PBNERR staff, MRC Project Lead, MRC Staff, and the Salish Sea Stewards Advisory Committee.
 - We welcomed two new members to the Salish Sea Stewards Advisory Committee - Maureen Jones and Joe Fletcher. The SSS Advisory Committee consists of SSS alumni, some of which are also MRC members.
 - We discussed some of the new tasks/responsibilities of the Advisory Committee. These are mostly things that the AC used to do and now they are taking on those tasks once more.
 - We are going to restart the SSS Communications Subcommittee to handle tasks like social media.
 - The 2026 Salish Sea Stewards training will start on February 10th and end on April 21st.
 - Currently working on the topics, speakers, and class schedule.
 - The fall Salish Sea Stewards social event was held October 16th at 10 am at the Northern State Recreation Area in Sedro Woolley. Lucy DeGrace with Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group presented the history of the park and the importance of Hansen Creek for salmon and our local wildlife.
 - Completed the [2025 Salish Sea Stewards Report](#) available on the MRC website.
 - 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.
 - WDFW Index Sites: Guemes Channel Index, Lovrics Assessment, Samish Index, Similk Bay Index.
 - Restoration Sites: Bowman Bay, Clayton Beach, and Similk Restore
 - Oct 2025 forage fish survey schedule:
- | Day | Date | Time | Location |
|----------|---------|------------|----------------|
| Friday | Oct. 10 | 12:00 noon | BOWMAN BAY |
| Thursday | Oct. 30 | 9:00 am | GUEMES CHANNEL |
| Thursday | Oct. 30 | 9:00 am | SIMILK BAY |
- 6 of 7 sites continue to successfully use WDFW online data form.
 - Kate Olson and Phill Dionne with WDFW hosted an all-day forage fish survey training for MRC forage fish volunteers on Wednesday, October 8th at Padilla Bay. Several volunteers from Skagit participated.
 - Questions about how much sediment to collect with samples. It depends on the sample, if it's mostly sand then less is needed. Still looking into the answer.
 - Forge Fish Survey Volunteers helped with Kids on the Beach at Fidalgo Bay on Oct 23.
 - Looking into the possibility of continuing the forage fish surveys at the Bowman Bay restoration site next year even though the Bowman Bay beach seining for nearshore fish use will end this year. Permitting and authorization would be needed to continue the forage fish surveys.
 - All spawning activity is starting to slow down now with the exception of Fidalgo Bay.
 - Kids on the Beach- Pete Haase:
 - Fall 2025 KOTB program- Oct 23 at the Fidalgo Bay resort. 43 eighth grade students from Conway Middle School participated in beach seining and forage fish surveys with the help of six Samish DNR staff and 25 volunteers. Samish DNR staff helped conduct 5 different seines along Fidalgo Bay. Students were more engaged than ever. We caught numerous fish as well as three hooded nudibranchs that smelled like melon, and the

kids had a blast taking turns smelling them. Lots of surf smelt eggs were found along the beach and the students were very excited to see the eggs about to hatch under the microscope. The [2025 Kids on the Beach Report](#) has been completed and is now available on the MRC website.

- Completed the [2025 Kids on the Beach Report](#) available on the MRC website.
- La Conner School Rain Garden – Tracy Alker/Lynne Wenberg-Davidson:
 - Delivered the Interpretive Sign, frame, and base to the school for installation
 - Lynne drafted a detailed plan for the rain garden and shared it with the school including adding 25 native plants, installing a temporary summer irrigation system, plant identification tags with Lushootseed names from the Swinomish, and developing a School Rain Garden Walking Tour Guide for classrooms – awaiting approval and confirmation from the School Principal before proceeding.
- Fidalgo Bay Day –Tracy Alker:
 - Fidalgo Bay Day took place Saturday, September 13, 2025, 11am-3pm at the Fidalgo Bay Resort!
 - Thank You cards sent to participating businesses, volunteers, and outreach booths
 - Follow-up survey sent to participating organizations
 - Completed the [2025 Fidalgo Bay Day Report](#) available on the MRC website.
 - FBD will not take place in 2026 unless we find a new MRC Project Lead and Event Coordinator or find another organization or volunteers that are willing to take it on.
 - Next Steps: Schedule a debrief meeting with Event Coordinator and Planning Committee, review outreach booth survey results, and discuss options for a 2026 FBD event.
- Pinto Abalone Restoration – Paul Dinnel:
 - Completed the [2025 Pinto Abalone Report](#) available on the MRC website.
 - 2025 project highlights: 6,596 juvenile abalone outplanted to 9 recovery sites in Skagit County waters, established 4 new outplant sites (totaling 15 sites in Skagit), induced 2 successful spawns producing 25 genetically unique families, and expanded partnerships in the abalone recover effort: Samish Indian Nation, Shannon Point Marine Center, Clallam/Jefferson MRCs, WDFW, Port Townsend Marine Center, and Seattle Aquarium.
 - Samish Indian Nation established several of their own sites that they will monitor, and maintain with additional abalone outplants
 - Shannon Point Marine Center’s Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) Program outplanted abalone at a couple of sites that they are now monitoring.
 - Clallam and Jefferson MRCs have joined in the effort doing some surveys and outplanting in their areas.
 - WDFW continues to provide support with their boats and divers.
 - Seattle Aquarium and Port Townsend Marine Center are using their space for a pinto abalone grow out center to expand capacity for outplanting more abalone.
- Olympia Oyster Restoration – Paul Dinnel:
 - Paul met with Betsy Peabody of Puget Sound Restoration Fund and others interested the Fidalgo Bay native oyster restoration work and possibly expanding native oyster restoration work to the coast in the future.
- 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).
 Last surveys of the year:

- **September 17 (Shannon Point)** – Last survey of the year: Brad Smith (Land-side Lead), Hal Lee, Dale Fournier, Elizabeth Drozda, Lynne Wenberg (on-water Lead)
 - **West kelp bed:** Waves and drift from wind prevented depth measurements on edge furthest from shore. Two separate beds in August survey have now grown together into one large bed, although not very dense, and expanded further off shore. Kelp fronds look healthy but some stipes show parasitic growth and deterioration (typical late season?). Several common birds for here observed: belted kingfisher, great blue herons, cormorants.
 - **East kelp bed:** No bed in East (again). Sargassum kelp greatly diminished compared to earlier in summer, and several clusters of healthy kelp but not a continuous bed. Six clumps/clusters of 2-6 kelp measured, but depth determination hampered by drift from wind and current. Fronds of kelp looked healthy, although some stipes show corrosion by parasitic organisms (typical of late season?). One belted kingfisher, several great blue herons, and one flock of cormorants in transit.
- Bowman Bay Beach Seining– Lynne Wenberg-Davidson:
 - Sept 12 seining results: 127 total fish caught. 47 staghorn sculpin, 10 English sole, and 70 Shiner perch. 6 volunteers contributed a total of 13.5 volunteer hours.
- Bowman Bay Plant Maintenance– Lynne Wenberg-Davidson:
 - A Fall Planting Event was held October 15 as part of Orca Recovery Week. It was the last Stewardship Day of the year at Bowman Bay. We got all the shrubs in the ground, mostly in zones 2 and 5 - 6 Hooker Willow, 20 Snowberry, 20 Douglas Spirea, 20 Nootka Rose. 10 volunteers, 31 volunteer hours, and 4 NWSF staff. Two employees from the PNW Trail Association also joined - hoping to collaborate with more volunteer stewardship opportunities in the future!
- Skagit Shoreline Needs Assessment- Lynne Wenberg-Davidson:

The contract with Confluence Environmental has been extended through December 31, 2025, 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 the new SoundIQ and also are available on the Skagit MRC website <https://www.skagitmrc.org/projects/skagit-shoreline-needs-assessment/>
 - A [“how-to video”](#) has been made as a tutorial for general public NEAP functionality. The video has been posted to a host site so it can be shared from the MRC Website and SoundIQ.
 - The buildout of the 5 high priority restoration projects identified in 2024 has been drafted and reviewed. The report is anticipated to be finalized by early November.
 - Confluence has agreed to support the NWSC Annual Conference and Collaborative Networking Activity in La Conner on November 8 to showcase Skagit’s NEAP Tool functionality and capabilities.

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)

Kids on the Beach- October 23 at Fidalgo Bay with Conway Middle School- 8th grade students



Photo: Pete Haase



Photo: Pete Haase



Photo: Anna Thomas



Photo: Annie England



Photo: Annie England



Photo: Annie England

Bowman Bay Orca Recovery Day Planting Event- October 15



Photo: Hallee Sexton



Photo: Anna Thomas



Photo: Anna Thomas

Salish Sea Stewards Fall Social Event- October 16, Northern State Recreation Area in Sedro Woolley



Photo: Erin Merklein



Photo: Rachelle Kierulff

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Skagit

Month/Year: Nov/2025

Submitted by: Tracy/Lynne

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

- **2026 Salish Sea Stewards Training** - dates have been set. Classes will be held Tuesdays, 1pm-5pm from February 10 through April 14th. Classes will mostly be held at Padilla Bay, with some field days. Registration begins December 1, 2025 – January 31, 2026. A link to the online registration will be made available soon on the [Skagit MRC website](#).
- **La Conner School Rain Garden**- The interpretive sign has been installed. Skagit County Intern got approval from the school to purchase and plant an additional 25 native plants which will hopefully get done before the end of the month.
- **Olympia Oyster Restoration**- Paul Dinnel wrote a piece on Fidalgo Bay oyster restoration project for an upcoming shellfish exhibit at the Skagit County Historical Museum in La Conner, which will also include oyster restoration in other bays in the county.

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):

- **Nov 6- Salish Sea Stewards Training Work Group Meeting**- 2:30pm, Zoom
- **Nov 7 & 8- MRC Conference** at Maple Hall, La Conner- Attended by 8 Skagit MRC members
- **Nov 10- Derelict Crab Pot Removal Planning Meeting**- 1pm, Zoom with NWSF and Snohomish MRC
- **Nov 13- Monthly MRC Meeting** cancelled due to the MRC Conference just one week before
- **Nov 17- Skagit MRC Kelp Monitoring Data Review Meeting** with NWSC- 11am Teams
- **Nov 18- Kelp Webinar**- Bull Kelp resilience and loss in the Salish Sea: results of an HSIL funded project
- **Dec 4- Salish Sea Stewards Training Work Group Meeting**- 2:30pm, Zoom
- **Dec 11- Monthly MRC Meeting**- 9am-11am, in person at Padilla Bay in the upstairs conference room.

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:
 - The Salish Sea Stewards Training Program Working Group met On November 6th virtually via Teams to continue planning the 2025 - 2026 SSS Training Season.
 - The training classes will run from February 10th through April 14th (unless an 11th session is needed).
 - Registration for the 2026 SSS Training Class opens on December 1st and runs through January 31st. A link to the online registration form will be made available on the Skagit MRC website. Space is limited to 26.
 - The curriculum has been drafted and Erin started reaching out to speakers. Most of the speakers and topics have been set into the 10-week schedule. The SSS Working Group would like to schedule a few additional speakers to add depth to the session on salmon. Potential speakers include Cecelia Gobin and Wayne Watne.
 - On April 14th, Graduation Day, there is an MRC panel set in the schedule. This panel of MRC members will help the participants understand the role of the MRC.

- The 2026 SSS Training Flyer is complete and committee members have started passing these out.
- Our next meeting is December 4th at 2:30. This will be a virtual meeting.
- 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.
 - WDFW Index Sites: Guemes Channel Index, Lovrics Assessment, Samish Index, Similk Bay Index.
 - Restoration Sites: Bowman Bay, Clayton Beach, and Similk Restore
 - November forage fish surveys at all 3 index sites and all 3 restoration sites were conducted, despite difficult scheduling around high daytime tides. Minimal spawning activity until later in April. Frequently changed beach conditions have been encountered now due to tides and winds. Many hardy volunteers continue the work.
- Kids on the Beach- Pete Haase:
 - Just getting started with planning the 2026 spring program and reaching out to several schools to gauge interest and schedules.
- La Conner School Rain Garden – Tracy Alker/Lynne Wenberg-Davidson
 - The interpretive sign has been installed
 - Lynne drafted a detailed plan for the rain garden and shared it with the school including adding 25 native plants, installing a temporary summer irrigation system, plant identification tags with Lushootseed names from the Swinomish, and developing a School Rain Garden Walking Tour Guide for classrooms.
 - We finally got approval from the school to move forward with our proposal. Halee, the Skagit County Intern, will purchase and install the plants and plant IDs and will help prepare the final report deliverable.
 - Former MRC member and Project Lead Elizabeth Drozda has been in contact with the La Conner Elementary School Science teacher who is interested in establishing a rain garden curriculum in her classroom. Students were disappointed that some of the plants they planted last fall did not survive.
- Fidalgo Bay Day –Tracy Alker:
 - This project is now complete and will not continue in 2026 unless we are able to get a new MRC Project Lead or find another organization or volunteers willing to take the lead.
 - Received feedback from 14 participating outreach booths in an online survey. 100% of the respondents thought that Fidalgo Bay Day was worthwhile and was successful in increasing public awareness of the marine environment, fostering stewardship, and nurturing partnerships. Unfortunately, there was no interest in participating in the planning of or leading the coordination of next year’s event.
- Pinto Abalone Restoration – Paul Dinne!
 - A new contract with Puget Sound Restoration Fund is anticipated to be signed soon.
 - Broodstock care, spawning activities and juvenile raising tasks are ongoing at PSRF's laboratory in Manchester.
- Olympia Oyster Restoration – Paul Dinne!
 - Paul wrote a piece on Fidalgo Bay oyster restoration for the Skagit County Historical Museum in La Conner for an upcoming shellfish exhibit, which will include other bays in the county.
- 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 now complete. All of the Skagit bull kelp surveys were completed from June – September and uploaded into Kobotoolbox.
- NWSC Skagit MRC Kelp Monitoring Data Review – November 17 (team leads)
- Bull Kelp resilience and loss in the Salish Sea: results of an HSIL funded project – November 18
- Bowman Bay Beach Seining– Lynne Wenberg-Davidson:
 - Beach seining continues at Bowman Bay - funding is in place for NWSF to continue January – December 2025. Next seining event is November 19.
 - Stats for October: 36 total fish caught. 22 staghorn sculpin, 8 English sole, and 6 Shiner perch. 5 volunteers contributed a total of 9.5 volunteer hours.
- Bowman Bay Plant Maintenance– Lynne Wenberg-Davidson:
 - A Fall Planting Event was held at Bowman Bay on October 15 as part of Orca Recovery Week. NWSF staff, volunteers and PNW Trail Association – 4 NWSF staff and 10 volunteers in all put in 31 volunteer hours to install more native plants (Hooker Willow, Snowberry, Douglas Spirea, Nootka Rose).
- Skagit Shoreline Needs Assessment- Lynne Wenberg-Davidson:
The contract with Confluence Environmental has been extended through December 31, 2025, 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 the new SoundIQ and also are available on the Skagit MRC website <https://www.skagitmrc.org/projects/skagit-shoreline-needs-assessment/>
 - A “[how-to video](#)” has been made as a tutorial for general public NEAP functionality. The video has been posted to a host site so it can be shared from the MRC Website and SoundIQ.
 - The buildout of the 5 high priority restoration projects identified in 2024 has been drafted and reviewed and will be finalized soon.
 - Confluence supported the MRC Annual Conference and Collaborative Networking Activity in La Conner on November 8 to showcase Skagit’s NEAP Tool functionality and capabilities. Received good feedback from other MRC’s and some have interest in doing similar for their counties.

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.):

- Paul Dinnel attended a meeting at Shannon Point Marine Center to discuss the possibility of pursuing a shoreline restoration project along the beach in front of Cannery Pond. This was the subject of a previous joint MRC/WWU project to evaluate the possibility that Cannery Pond was once a pocket estuary. Our conclusion was that it likely was not a pocket estuary, but that with proper engineering it could possibly be so in the future. The ball is presently in WWU's court.

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

2025 Annual MRC Conference in La Conner- MRC Collaborative
Networking Activity- Skagit's NEAP Tool Demo presented by Phil
Bloch with Confluence



Photo Credit- Lynne Wenberg-Davidson

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Snohomish

Month/Year: Oct 2025

Submitted by: Elisa Dawson and Joycelyn Blue

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

- The MRC held their annual planning retreat and is currently in the process of finalizing their 2026 workplan.
- As a part of the partnership with the MRC, Beach watchers tabled at Meadowdale beach park on Sep 25 and Oct 11 teaching visitors about salmon and the restoration site.

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

Elisa Dawson has taken a new role at Snohomish County and the County will be hiring for the Senior Planner position.

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

Elisa Dawson attended the beneficial use of dredged material meeting on Oct 1

The MRC planning retreat was held on Oct 15

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

The MRC Grant is currently with Council and awaiting signature.

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

Strategic Planning / MRC Admin: The MRC completed its MRC planning retreat on October 15. Consultants lead the MRC through a planning process to create the 2026 workplan.

Derelict Vessel (MRC Grant 2025 – 2027): The subcommittee is meeting monthly and currently gathering known data for their framework.

Marine Vegetation Outreach (MRC OTGP grant project for 2024 – 2025): The subcommittee reflected on the event and had a discussion about what worked well and areas to potentially improve for future events. The group is beginning the first draft of the outreach plan deliverable.

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

Forage Fish Monitoring: Picnic Point and Meadowdale were sampled on Oct 20. Howarth Park was not able to be sampled. The forage fish report draft is complete.

Marine Vegetation Monitoring: The kelp monitoring report draft is complete. Staff attended the kelp monitoring workgroup meeting on Oct 15.

Nearshore Restoration: none

Outreach: Beach cleanups in partnership with WSU Beach Watchers continue to be held quarterly. The quarter 3 beach cleanup is scheduled for Nov 2 at Howarth Park. As a part of the partnership Beach watchers also tabled at Meadowdale beach park on Sep 25 and Oct 11 teaching visitors about salmon and the restoration site. Discussions of the 2026 contract are in progress.

Crabber Outreach/Oil Spill Preparedness and Prevention: none

Marine Water Quality: The Water Quality subcommittee is refining a new draft of the Possession Sound marine report card.

Derelict Vessels: The vessel turn-in event in February 2026 in partnership with DNR and the Port of Everett has been canceled due to the Port of Everett deciding to no longer participate.

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:

- Beach clean up at Howarth Park – Nov 2
- MRC Conference – Nov 7 and 8
- Forage fish monitoring Picnic Point and Meadowdale – Nov date being scheduled
- Next MRC Meeting – Nov 19

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: Nov 2025

Submitted by: Elisa Dawson and Joycelyn Blue

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

- The MRC 2026 workplan is finalized and will be available on the website soon.
- A few members and staff attended the HSIL Bull Kelp webinar on Nov 18.

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

The County is in process of hiring for the Senior Planner staff position. Elisa Dawson's last day as MRC staff will be November 26.

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

Members and staff from the MRC attended the NWSC conference Nov 7-8

Staff and a few members attended the HSIL Bull Kelp webinar on Nov 18

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

The MRC Grant has been signed and accepted.

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

Strategic Planning / MRC Admin: The MRC approved the 2026 workplan.

Derelict Vessel (MRC Grant 2025 – 2027): The subcommittee is meeting monthly and currently gathering known data for their framework.

Marine Vegetation Outreach (MRC OTGP grant project for 2024 – 2025): The subcommittee completed the final draft of the outreach plan deliverable and presented it to the MRC for feedback.

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

Forage Fish Monitoring: Picnic Point and Meadowdale were sampled on Nov 17. Howarth Park was sampled on Oct 29.

Marine Vegetation Monitoring: Staff met with NWSC staff for data review.

Nearshore Restoration: Elisa Dawson discussed the MRC's shoreline armor ideas and scope of work with the Snohomish/Stillaguamish LIO on November 13. The LIO may be participating in a Puget Sound wide armor analysis similar to the ideas the Snohomish MRC has been discussing which are based off the Island MRC study. A final decision on if the LIO will be participating in that project will come in mid-December and the MRC will follow up if the project does move forward.

Outreach: Beach cleanups in partnership with WSU Beach Watchers continue to be held quarterly. Discussions of the 2026 contract are in progress and early planning for the Starlight Beach Walk on Jan 28 has begun.

Crabber Outreach/Oil Spill Preparedness and Prevention: none

Marine Water Quality: The final draft of the Possession Sound marine report card was presented to the MRC at the November meeting.

Derelict Vessel Removal: 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:

- Forage fish monitoring Picnic Point and Meadowdale – Dec 9
- Forage fish monitoring Howarth Park – Dec 13
- Next MRC Meeting – No MRC meeting in December
- Starlight Beach Walk – Jan 28

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: October 2025

Submitted by: Austin Rose and Dana Daniels

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

- MRC members (7) and staff will be attending the 2025 NWS Conference in November
- Darcy Bird, with the Washington Department of Ecology Spill Preparedness, Prevention, and Response Program (SPPR), will be visiting the November MRC meeting to continue discussing how the Whatcom MRC could play a role in damage assessments in the event of an oil spill.

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 October MRC meeting was held on the 2nd. Highlights included:
 - A discussion about the continuation of European Green Crab (EGC) monitoring/trapping efforts in Whatcom County after 2027 as the Northwest Straits Commission will be phasing this work out over the next 2 years. Todd Haas, Special Assistant Director with the Puget Sound Partnership, has been a member of the multiagency coordination group that manages or helps advise the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) on the EGC emergency. Todd and Lucas Hart posed these questions to the MRC: *1 - How do MRCs want to be engaged, if at all, in European green crab management moving forward? 2 - What entities exist that could potentially fill the shoes of the Northwest Straits Commission in more of a regional, broad-scale coordination?*
 - There are two vacancies on the MRC, each representing a 'Recreational' Interest.
 - The Protect Mud Bay Cliffs (PMBC) visited the September MRC meeting expressing their concerns about the proposed development around N. Chuckanut Bay – particularly the stormwater. The MRC agreed to submitting another comment letter reinforcing their concerns of potential impact to the health of the bay.
 - Members began prepping for discussions at the 2025 Northwest Straits Conference in November.

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.
- HABs
The HABs team continued sampling weekly at Semiahmoo Marina and Birch Bay Village Marina. Samples were/will be collected on October 7th, 14th, 21st, and 28th. Birch Bay and Drayton Harbor remain closed for recreational shellfish harvest due to PST biotoxins in these areas. Sampling Will switch to every other week in November.

- Forage Fish Surveys

The MRC conducted a forage fish survey at Little Squalicum Beach on October 17th. Staff and volunteers attended the WDFW Forage Fish training at Padilla Bay on October 8th.

- Bull Kelp Monitoring

The MRC wrapped up all bull kelp monitoring surveys in August. Participating staff and volunteers will be meeting with Jeff Whitty in November to discuss the surveys and results.

- Olympia Oyster Restoration

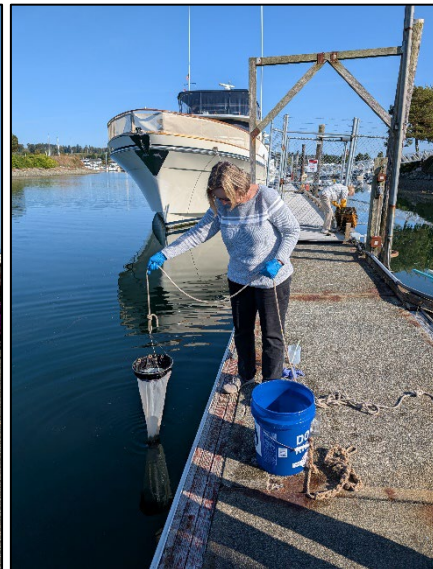
MRC staff have been working on the permits for Olympia oyster restoration efforts in Drayton Harbor and North Chuckanut Bay for work that is planned for 2026.

Other:

Oil Spill Response Capacity in Whatcom County:

Darcy Bird, [Spill Preparedness, Prevention and Response Program \(SPPR\)](#), Washington Department of Ecology, will be visiting the November MRC meeting to continue discussing how the Whatcom MRC could play a role in damage assessments in the event of an oil spill.

Photos



Top Left: MRC volunteers participate in forage fish survey training with WDFW at Padilla Bay.
 Top right: MRC members, Jackie Dexter and Paul Meyer, table at SeaFeast in Bellingham.
 Bottom left: HABs sampling team group photo (Photo credit: Resident from Drayton Harbor).
 Bottom right: HAB volunteer collects a plankton sample at Birch Bay Marina. Photo credits:
 Dana Daniels, MRC Staff.

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Whatcom

Month/Year: November 2025

Submitted by: Austin Rose and Dana Daniels

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

- MRC members (7) and staff attended the 2025 NWS Conference in November
- Laura Hanna joined the committee representing recreational interest

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

- Laura Hanna joined the committee representing recreational interest
- Andrew Shelton resigned from the committee

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

- The November MRC meeting was held on the 6th. Highlights included:
 - An update from Lisa Kaufman with the Northwest Straits Foundation on the [Clayton Beach Restoration Project](#). This project aims to remove 1,300 linear feet of shoreline armoring and pilings, restore over 9 acres of beach and backshore habitat, improve 4 acres of riparian habitat, and improve public access and enjoyment of Clayton Beach.
 - Approval of a letter of support for the Marine, Economy, and Research Institute for Sustainability (MERIS) project proposed in Blaine. MERIS is envisioned as an economic generator and a multi-use hub supporting private, government, and non-profit work in all aspects of sustainable marine aquaculture, research, innovation, education, and related activities, including national and cross-border collaborations.
 - An overview of MRC projects funded for 2025-2027, including scope, goals, activities, outputs, and outcomes.
 - There are two vacancies on the MRC, one representing a recreational interest and one an economic interest.

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.
- HABs
The HABs team switched from sampling weekly to sampling every other week at Semiahmoo Marina and Birch Bay Village Marina. Samples were collected on November 4th and 18th. As temperatures cool and sunlight diminishes, phytoplankton counts are becoming sparser. Birch Bay and Drayton Harbor have reopened for recreational shellfish harvest.
- Forage Fish Surveys
The MRC conducted a forage fish survey at Clayton Beach on November 3rd and at Little Squalicum Beach on November 14th. Staff and volunteers were able to observe live eggs in the samples from Little Squalicum Beach!

- Bull Kelp Monitoring

The MRC wrapped up all bull kelp monitoring surveys in August. Participating staff and volunteers met with NWSC staff in November to discuss the surveys and to start planning for 2026.

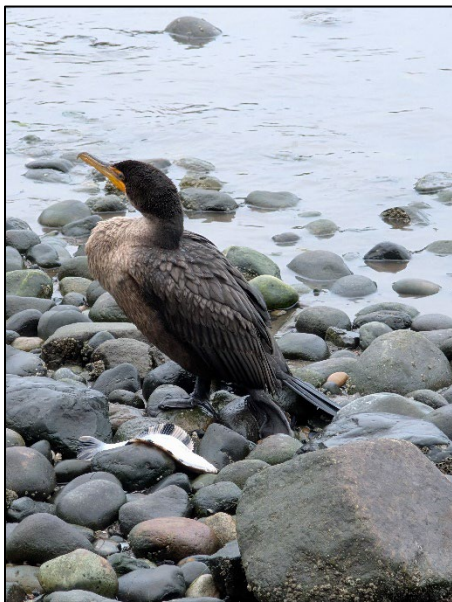
- Olympia Oyster Restoration

MRC staff have been working on the permits for Olympia oyster restoration efforts in Drayton Harbor and North Chuckanut Bay for work that is planned for 2026.

Other:

MRC members attended the 2025 Northwest Straits Conference at Maple Hall in La Conner on November 7th and 8th.

Photos



Cormorant with a flounder at Little Squalicum Beach. Photo credit: Dana Daniels, MRC Staff.