



# SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Summary of the **August 11, 2022**, Skagit County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) Microsoft Teams Meeting

## Attendees:

- **MRC Members:** Tracy Alker (MRC Staff), Jay Lind, Lynne Wenberg-Davidson, Darla Gay Smith, Paul Dinnel, Pete Haase, Kevin Anderson, Kari Odden, Jodi Bluhm (Matt Castle's Alternate)
  - **MRC Members Absent:** Brian Robson, Jude Apple, Betsy Stevenson, Diane Hennebert, Catey Ritchie, Matt Castle
- **Others in Attendance:** Cindy Elston, SCPW; Sasha Horst, NWSC; Jessica Page, NWSF

**Call to Order and Introduction:** Lynne called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. and opened the meeting with introductions.

- **Approval of Minutes:** July 14, 2022, MRC meeting were approved by consensus as written.
- **Public Comments:** none

## NWS Foundation Passport to Marine Adventure – Jessica Page

The passport to marine adventure app is up and running in the app store. Link to NWS Foundation webpage about the app: [Passport To Marine Adventure – Online Portal | NWStraitsFoundation.org](https://www.nwstraitsfoundation.org/passport-to-marine-adventure-online-portal). The goal is to get people visiting coastal sites and beaches in the 7 counties, to spread awareness about what the Initiative and partners have been doing in terms of restoration and monitoring. There are educational aspects on the app about each site, for 3 sites in each county. Users can collect points by visiting sites and redeem them with local businesses for discounts. Educational information on the app is related to the site (for example, a beach might have information about eelgrass or forage fish surveys). They currently have a limit of 40 sites, including rewards sites, on the app but are hoping to raise the site limit, and are looking for more sites to swap out other sites in the future.

In Skagit County, 3 sites are currently active: Kiket Island, Port of Anacortes' rain garden, and Bayview State Park. They hope to add a few more sites to the app in the next couple months and are thinking about Bowman Bay and Sunset Beach as possible future sites. Paul suggested the South Padilla Bay Shore Trail as a future site. Pete mentioned that Kiket is a heavily visited site with a small parking lot that fills up quickly. Jessica said that they launched the app last month and not many people are using it yet, but if accessibility becomes a problem, they may switch sites.

MRC members were asked to provide input on the selected sites, environmental education ideas, pictures of the sites, and local tips and things to do. They are also looking for suggestions for potential reward sites in Skagit County. You can contact Jessica Page via email: [page@nwstraitsfoundation.org](mailto:page@nwstraitsfoundation.org).

## Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Report – Sasha Horst

- **Collaborative Conservation Workshop- Sept 16:** This will be the first in-person event in a long time and will be keeping it simple. The event will be held at Padilla Bay on Friday, September 16<sup>th</sup>, 11am-4pm . They would like each MRC to bring to the group some information about a project and do a round-robin "speed dating" about lessons learned, project sharing, and networking.
- **Derelict vessel removal:** NWSC will be putting together a work group and need roughly 1 person from each MRC to help prioritize the vessels for removal and then will do an interagency agreement with DNR. Some MRCs prioritized a chunk of their money for derelict vessel removal, so they will be getting some of their vessels high on the list for

removal, but all MRCs can be part of the workgroup. Lynne will be the point-person for Skagit MRC for the derelict vessel removal project.

- In Memoriam, Terry Williams: Terry Williams, member of the Tulalip Tribes and one of the founding members of Northwest Straits Initiative, recently passed away. Terry was an influential leader in salmon recovery, climate action, and protecting the Salish Sea. He will be greatly missed.
- Congressional Funding Update: The NWS Commission finally received the notification from NOAA that they have officially received the award for congressional funding, so they can start getting agreements launched. The grant starts January 1, 2023 and expires December 31, 2023.

## Project Status & Discussion

- Salish Sea Stewards – Darla Gay Smith: The 6-person Salish Sea Stewards Advisory Committee met on July 20th, 2022. We are actively recruiting 3 new members from the 2022 graduates to the Advisory Committee, and are reviewing feedback from this year's training program to help refine next year's Salish Sea Stewards training program. The traditional July picnic for all Salish Sea Stewards was hosted on Saturday, July 16, 2022, by PBNERR and Friends of Skagit Beaches. Over 40 stewards attended. Padilla Bay conducted a lab facility tour and assisted WWU Shannon Point students in their outdoor table presentations of summer research projects. A GERE-a-DELI lunch was provided by Friends of Skagit Beaches and the reserve. The Advisory Committee works continually to keep volunteers informed of current volunteer opportunities available through the SSS electronic news bulletin, "The Wave" and Facebook.
- Fidalgo Bay Day – Darla Gay Smith: The 2022 Fidalgo Bay Day Planning Committee's last virtual meeting was held on July 29, 2022. Fidalgo Bay Day will be held August 20<sup>th</sup> from 11:00am to 3:00pm at Fidalgo Bay Resort. Opening ceremonies will be presented by Jay Lind and Samish elder Rosie Cayou James. 14 organizations have confirmed participation with educational booths. Activities will include the WWU Shannon Point Marine Center touch tank, a no-host salmon barbeque, beach seining demonstration, 12 kid-friendly aquatic-themed crafts, and educational booths. Friends of Skagit Beaches will be running a kids art contest and the passport program. Paul is working with Taylor Shellfish to get a donation of oysters & clams/blue mussels to grill. Four Anacortes restaurants will be participating in the chowder contest: Adrift, Secret Cove, Bob's Chowder Bar, and 13moons.
- Forage Fish Surveys – Pete Haase: Forage fish surveys continue. There were about 48,000 eggs in one sample at Fidalgo Bay East, and all were dead. The spawning volume this summer is low compared to years past, and survival rate is so low because of the heat and sun and low tide. They will be cutting back some survey activity starting this year and next year, because some of the surveys are done on restoration sites and the monitoring duration required will have ended, and Department of Fish and Wildlife do not have the resources and time to handle all the samples. Marches point will probably be reduced to one sample once a month, will continue at Bowman Bay monthly, Kiket Island will either end or be reduced to one trip of the month, and Fidalgo Bay will be reduced. They may take on additional survey work on the land trust and reserve on Samish Island.
- Intern project at the Salish Sea School – Pete Haase: Nothing new to report. Julia and Trevor will have more information later this year when they start analyzing their data.
- Kids on the Beach – Pete Haase: Nothing new to report, but they we will probably have more to report next month.
- Pinto Abalone Restoration – Paul Dinneel: Nothing new to report. The field work is complete, and now they are working on data analysis and report writing.
- Olympia Oyster Restoration – Paul Dinneel: No activity this last month. They will be collecting bags next spring and counting new recruits. Next month they will be collecting the shell strings (shells on a stick for monitoring oyster recruitment) working in conjunction with Puget Sound Restoration Fund at 2 sites in Fidalgo Bay: one at the trussell and one at the Samish RV Park.
- Sharpes Corner Stormwater Sampling – Diane Hennebert: No updates.
- Kayak Kelp Surveys – Lynne Wenberg-Davidson: We started monthly kelp surveys in June. We currently survey three sites: Shannon Point, Bowman Bay Coffin Rocks, and Biz Point. Julie Ledbetter from the Department of Natural Resources will be visiting each kelp survey site across the state and has submitted potential dates for her to visit. Brad Smith and Dale Fournier will be moving back to the east coast. Brad leads the kelp surveys at Shannon Point, and Lynne will be taking over the Shannon Point surveys for the rest of the season. There are 5 new kayaker volunteers who have joined the teams. Kelp is growing slowly this year.
  - Shannon Point: Next survey is tomorrow, August 12<sup>th</sup>, and will have 6 kayakers (3 new). Will report findings next month. The last survey will be September 9<sup>th</sup>.

- Coffin Rocks: Last survey was July 25th, had 4 kayakers (2 were new this season). Kelp looked healthy with a finger of new growth from the north end, and the normal hole has been filling in with new kelp growth despite being 4 feet deep. Next survey is September 10th and will be the last of the season.
- Biz Point: Last survey was July 17th. Kelp bed has expanded a little in width but is still far narrower than previous years, no sea stars and no animals observed. The last survey will be September 8th.
- Bowman Bay Restoration – Lynne Wenberg-Davidson: The last volunteer party of the year was on August 8<sup>th</sup>. Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group had over 18 volunteers, many of which were from Crane Aerospace as a sponsored volunteer event and several Salish Sea Stewards. Nate White, the new Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group lead joined as well. They spread 7 cubic yards of bark, did some nominal weeding, and watered a portion of it. SFEG has 2 more waterings in September, and a staff walk-through on September 30<sup>th</sup>.

### **Collaborative Conservation Workshop – MRC Project Discussion:**

Lynne Wenberg, Jay Lind, Paul Dinnel, and Pete Haase are planning to attend the Collaborative Conservation Workshop. Each MRC will select one project to share with the other MRCs. Skagit MRC will be focusing on the theme of cross-collaboration among our projects (forage fish surveys, restoration projects, coordinating Salish Sea Stewards volunteers, etc). Lynne will work on filling out the form, which is due by August 25<sup>th</sup>.

### **Miscellaneous Announcements: All**

- Lynne will follow up with Catie and CC Pete and Tracy about reaching out to the Sauk-Suiattle and the Upper Skagit to see if they approve the NWS Commission's land acknowledgement and if they would like to be included.
- Jeff Whitty of NWSC has been leading an invasive European green crab removal activity. They are targeting areas in Skagit where green crab has been found and need help with two sites: Colony Creek and Pidgeon Point. They need volunteers in September and October for trapping, carrying packets or buckets, walking around in muddy sites, checking the traps for rebaiting, handling green crabs and assessing color/condition/sex, recording data, cleaning and organizing, taking pictures, and community outreach. They would love to have shoreline landowners involved and help from the MRC. They could use whatever help people are willing to volunteer, whether it's a few hours every couple of weeks or a few days a week. You can use the link to the questionnaire or the QR code to sign up.

**The meeting adjourned at 10:18am. The next MRC meeting will be held September 8th via Microsoft Teams.**