



SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the January 10, 2019, Skagit County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) meeting, held at the Skagit County Administration Building in Mount Vernon.

- **MRC Members Attending:** Sarah Tchang, Jay Lind, Kari Odden (Lynne Jordan's Alternate), Pete Haase, Paul Dinnel, Phyllis Bravinder, Tracy Alker, Rachel Best, Nathan Biletnikoff, Betsy Stevenson, Jodi Bluhm (Todd Woodard's Alternate), Todd Mitchell, Jude Apple
- **MRC Members Absent:** Jamey Selleck, Lynne Jordan, Todd Woodard
- **Others Attending:** Lisa Kaufman, NWSF; Alice Sigurdson, Camp Fire Samish; Diane Hennebert, City of Anacortes

Call to Order and Introduction: Paul Dinnel called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. and opened the meeting with introductions.

Approval of Minutes: December 13, 2018, MRC meeting minutes were approved as written.

Public Comments:

- Nate shared information about Governor Jay Inslee's new carbon initiative. There are two primary focus areas. One is primarily the electrification of the Washington State ferry fleet. The other focus is on reducing stormwater impacts on water quality across Puget Sound. Inslee also wants 100 percent clean energy in WA by 2045.
- Jude reported that Rozema Boat Works recently applied for a permit to upgrade and expand their wharf and dock at Bay View. It includes several different mitigation actions recommended by Padilla Bay NERR including: placing 100 cubic yards of beach nourishment, removing manmade debris and riprap, and replacing the solid wood dock with grading material so there is some light passage.

Northwest Straits Foundation Project Updates: Lisa Kaufman

- **Andeavor Grant/ March's Point Beach Nourishment Project Update:** The Northwest Straits Foundation recently received \$35,000 from the Andeavor Tesoro Anacortes Refinery (now called Marathon Anacortes Refinery) to do a beach nourishment project at March's Point in Anacortes. Lisa thanked Pete Haase for bringing forth this project idea to the Foundation. The project site is located along approximately 1500 linear feet of shoreline on the north side of March's Point. The site is a known forage fish spawning area with a lot of overhanging vegetation, which is a huge benefit. However, the spawning habitat has been negatively impacted by fallen road revetment material resulting in the direct burial of spawning habitat and a loss of adequate sediment. The Andeavor Grant will be used to help support a feasibility assessment to determine needs and methods for restoring nearshore habitat and function, some preliminary design, and baseline monitoring. The baseline monitoring will be conducted by volunteers. Pete Haase will lead the forage fish surveys and Jason Morgan will lead the beach seining and other nearshore monitoring. The Foundation will have an opportunity to apply for additional funding to support the next phase of this project next year. The MRC discussed the possibility of forming a subcommittee to work with the NWSF to help oversee this project.
- **Shoreline Armor Reduction and Prevention (SHARP) Program Update:** The NWSF held some great vegetation and shoreline processes workshops in 2018 with National Estuary Program (EPA) funding through the Habitat Strategic Initiative, including one here in Skagit County. The Foundation has some remaining NEP funding that will be stretched out until September. The focus will be on doing a few more site visits and finishing up the design work and permitting for those sites where they were able to get shoreline landowners engaged in removing shoreline armoring. Lisa is still working through some of the details on the shoreline riprap removal project in Similk Bay. The Foundation has \$50,000 from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for the Similk Bay project, but still needs more matching funds to actually make the project go. Lisa noted that ESRP Grant Funds will soon be taking over the Shore Friendly program. A Request for Proposals (RFP) will be posted the end of this month. Unfortunately, the structure of this funding does not include the actual outreach component of the Shore Friendly program. Instead, it will be a very technical application for technical site visits, research, and gathering more data. This funding could also be used for design, permitting, and applying for other grant applications for the implementation of armor removal projects. Lisa

plans to organize a conference call soon to start brainstorming ideas for the shoreline armor reduction and removal program. The NWSF will try to seek funding from other sources to use for outreach. But the funding opportunities are starting to become a little more challenging.

- Near Term Action (NTA) Proposal: Lisa is working on the second phase of the NTA Proposal which is due today. PSP identified 27 regional projects that will get a second look including two NWSF projects: 1. Shoreline Landowner Outreach, and 2. Shoreline Restoration Monitoring. Lisa and Jason will be working with Jason Toft to try to get a regional dataset of the changes that happen when the armor is removed.
- Skagit Restoration Initiative (SRI) Funds Project Update: \$10,000 of SRI funds have been allocated to the Skagit Land Trusts (SLT) water quality study at the Graber property on Fidalgo Bay. SLT in partnership with the Samish Indian Nation have been sampling two creeks that flow into Fidalgo Bay. They did an assessment of the dam to see if it was impacting the water quality. The results indicate the dam is not impacting the water quality. In fact, it might actually be helping. SLT would like to expand the outreach to more landowners than what was in the original scope of work. The scope of work and allocation of funds will need to be modified with approval of the MRC subcommittee.

Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Report: *Nathan Biletnikoff*

Not much has happened since the last NWSC meeting which was reported at our last MRC meeting. The next NWSC meeting will be held January 25 in Island County from 10am – 3pm. Nate said he would be happy to attend if the newly appointed NWSC representatives are unavailable.

Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) Report: *Jay Lind*

Don Hunger has been hired as the NWSF's new Interim Director, while Caroline Gibson is on medical leave. Don will be starting his new position on February 1. Caroline plans to work part-time from Port Townsend as she is able. Don has a lot of experience in leading non-profits and is very familiar with the Northwest Straits Initiative.

MRC Administrative Report: *Tracy*

- MRC Grant QTR1 Progress Reports/Hours Due – Jan 11: Tracy thanked MRC members for submitting their volunteer hours and for providing project updates for the progress reports. All grant deliverables posted in EAGL will now be accessible to the public. We will need to be careful about removing any sensitive information from the grant deliverables before uploading them to EAGL, such as home phone numbers, addresses, emails, etc.
- 2019-2020 MRC Project Planning/Funding: We will need to start thinking about what projects we want to propose in the 2019-2020 MRC Grant cycle. We should be prepared to respond to a sudden increase or decrease in funding. The next grant application will be structured around Actions to Impacts. A list of projects with a brief description will be due in late February!
- Northwest Straits Initiative Funding Support: Lucas has been in contact with Congressman Rick Larsen's office to seek additional State funding support for the NWSI. Lucas provided the Congressman's office with a list of potential projects to show how the funding could be spent including ongoing projects with expansion opportunities and new projects that haven't been implemented yet. Some of the ongoing projects with expansion opportunities include: Kelp Recovery and Monitoring; Crabber Outreach; Eelgrass Protection and Monitoring; Pinto Abalone Restoration; Plastic Free Salish Sea; Olympia Oyster Restoration; MyCoast Application Expansion; Digging for Dinner (community education on sustainable shellfish harvest and water quality); and Nearshore Monitoring. Other potential projects that haven't been initiated yet include: Plankton Monitoring; Ocean Acidification Monitoring; and the Shore Friendly Program. Shore Friendly is an education and incentive program for homeowner bulkhead removal and nearshore restoration.
- Letter of Support to Legislators for Funding: Pete and Paul drafted a letter for the Board of County Commissioners to sign to the legislators in support of continued state funding for the MRCs. Tracy plans to make a few edits before sending it to the Board of County Commissioners for signature.
- Fidalgo for the Future Cleanup Event- March 23: Alli Schuh with the Anacortes Activist Student Union invited the MRC to participate in a cleanup event called Fidalgo for the Future on Sat March 23 in collaboration with the Anacortes High School Green Club, Friends of the Forest, and Transition Fidalgo and Friends. The Friends of Skagit Beaches will likely be participating as well. They will be inviting local business owners to pledge that they are going to transition away from single-use plastics in their business. Because the MRC is an Advisory Committee to the Board of County Commissioners and not an advocacy group, we cannot participate, but individual MRC members can participate on their own.

- Anacortes Rock Class Article: Micah Arnott with the Anacortes Rock Class is interested in writing an article about what the MRC does to protect the ocean. Pete Haase will be working with Micah on this. It will be a good opportunity to practice telling our story.
- Camp Kirby Partnership Opportunity: Alice with Camp Kirby will be meeting with Tracy, Pete, and Paul after today's MRC meeting to talk about potential partnership opportunities. They are particularly interested in talking about the Olympia oyster restoration, Kids on the Beach, forage fish surveys and other opportunities to expand their education and outreach program at their youth camp.

Project Status & Discussion

- Salish Sea Stewards: Applications are now being accepted for the SSS training. The application deadline is March 1 and is available on the MRC website. The training will be approximately 40 hours spanning ten weeks, starting March 19 – May 21, 2019. In return, volunteers will be asked to commit 40 hours of volunteer time towards MRC or related projects. Classes will be held every Tuesday from 1:00pm to 5:00pm at the Padilla Bay Reserve Facility. The facility has been reserved. Joan Drinkwin with NRC will once again be performing work as the Volunteer Program Coordinator. We have received three applications so far. Our budget was reduced this year, so we are asking participants to pay a \$12 fee to cover the costs of the background checks. The Friends of Skagit Beaches will be handling the fees. The next SSS Planning Subcommittee will take place this afternoon at Padilla Bay. The focus of the meeting will be on planning the training curriculum, recruiting volunteers, and promoting the training program. We will also be discussing the MRC Opportunity Funds and the proposal for the Salish Sea Stewards volunteer program needs assessment and workshop.
- Fidalgo Bay Day: Fidalgo Bay Resort has been reserved for next year's Fidalgo Bay Day on August 24th, 2019. Jay will be working with Pete and Gina to plan and coordinate the event. The Friends of Skagit Beaches will once again host the very popular Discovery Passport Station activity with other sources of funding for the prizes. This year's event will be part of the Skagit MRC's 20th Anniversary Celebration. We will also have the beach seining activity and the Shannon Point Marine Center touch tank. Jude shared that the Shannon Point Marine Center (SPMC) recently hired a new Education Program Coordinator, Coral Girkey. Coral will be SPMC's new contact person for coordinating the touch tank for Fidalgo Bay Day. Pete will help distribute 'Save the Date' cards at several upcoming events to help promote Fidalgo Bay Day.
- Forage Fish Surveys: Surveys continue at our restoration sites and index sites. Pete Haase and other volunteers took forage fish sampling equipment and egg samples to the Skagit River Interpretive Center on December 29 to give a talk and demonstration as part of the Bald Eagle Festival. They also took microscopes and egg samples for an activity at the Sedro-Woolley Evergreen Elementary School's Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) night for about 300 families on January 16. They will also be taking their forage fish gear and a poster to the Friends of Skagit Beach's lecture series on Friday, January 18 for a lecture on forage fish.
- Kids on the Beach Project: Last year we contracted with Mira Lutz to develop and implement this pilot project. Mira recently got hired with the SeaDoc Society/UC Davis as their new Education Coordinator. We are currently working on contract negotiations with UC Davis to continue to expand the program to other schools in 2019. If we cannot get a contract in place soon, we will need to start working on another alternative. We've gotten several inquiries about the program from other schools, so we know there is interest.
- Bowman Bay Restoration: We now have a contract in place with the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group to continue plant maintenance activities in 2019. Large woody debris have been accumulating along the shoreline and the plants are really filling in nicely, particularly the dune grass and coastal strawberry. The shrubs are still struggling a little bit because of the harsh climate conditions. We will likely be planting a few evergreen trees donated by SFEG in 2019. Plant maintenance work parties will be scheduled sometime this spring and summer. Lisa recommended the MRC consider budgeting additional funding to continue to do plant maintenance in 2020 until the plants become well established.
- Pinto Abalone Recovery: The Puget Sound Restoration Fund (PSRF) is gearing up to do their diver surveys to look for survival, growth, and new natural recruits. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is currently seeking public comment on a proposal to change the status of pinto abalone from a Species of Concern to a State Endangered Species. WDFW recently held public meetings in Port Townsend and Anacortes to present background information, answer questions, and receive comments. Paul will be drafting a letter that will be sent to the Board of

County Commissioners and WDFW on behalf of the MRC in support of changing the status of pinto abalone to a State Endangered Species.

- Olympia Oyster Restoration: Paul recently completed a report on Olympia Oyster Restoration in Fidalgo Bay and Cypress Island which is currently being reviewed. The report summarizes all of the work that has been done over the last 16 years. Information from the report will be included in the online Encyclopedia of Puget Sound. Paul is scheduled for a seminar on Olympia oysters at Western Washington University (WWU) next week. Field work will start up again in April or May 2019.
- Kayak Kelp Surveys: Phyllis will be attending the Kelp Recovery Workshop at Padilla Bay on February 28.

MRC Officer Elections:

The Committee unanimously appointed the following MRC Officers:

- Sarah Tchang – MRC Chair
- Betsy Stevenson- MRC Vice Chair
- Pete Haase- NWSC Representative
- Phyllis Bravinder- NWSC Alternate

Miscellaneous Events and Announcements:

- Terry Stevens Retirement Open House- **January 10**: 4pm-6:30pm at Padilla Bay.
- Friends of Skagit Beaches Annual Meeting- **January 17**: 11:00am- 2:00pm at the Padilla Bay National Research Reserve. A short business meeting followed by a potluck lunch. Lisa Kaufman will give a presentation on nearshore restoration and monitoring and the value of citizen scientists.
- Skagit Land Trust's Annual Membership Meeting- **January 17**: 5:00pm - 7:30pm at the Lincoln Theater in Mount Vernon.
- Friends of Skagit Beaches Annual Winter Lecture Series: The first lecture will be held **January 18, 2019** at the NW Education Services District Building in Anacortes, 7pm-8:30pm. "Forage Fish in the Southern Salish Sea" presented by Dr. Todd Sandell, PhD, Senior Forage Fish Biologist, WDFW. He will discuss recent studies that will help lead to better understanding, protection, and management of these crucial fish species, their habitats, and the species that depend on them. For more information about this and other upcoming Lecture Series topics please visit www.skagitbeaches.org
- Storming the Sound- **January 24**: 9am-4:30pm at Maple Hall in La Conner. Storming the Sound is a conference for environmental educators in the north Puget Sound region to share their interest and expertise. They are currently seeking presenters. There is a registration fee of \$10. You can register online: <http://www.pacname.org/regional-chapters/washington/storming-the-sound/#tab-id-1>.
- Pacific Estuarine Research Society Conference- **April 25-27**: This conference will most likely be hosted at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort. More details to come. It will be the first time it has been held here in about five years. The theme of the conference will be "Performing Science in Today's Changing World". For more information: <http://www.pers-erf.org/>
- Skagit Land Trust's Fidalgo Bay Carstens Stewardship- **February 2**: The work party will be focusing on pulling ivy and planting native shrubs to help this beautiful parcel reclaim its natural habitat.

The meeting adjourned at around 10:45 a.m. The next MRC meeting will be held February 14, 2019 at the Fidalgo Bay Resort, 4701 Fidalgo Bay Road Anacortes.



SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the March 14, 2019, Skagit County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) meeting, held at the Skagit County Administration Building in Mount Vernon.

- **MRC Members Attending:** Sarah Tchang, Jay Lind, Pete Haase, Tracy Alker, Betsy Stevenson, Suzanne Schull (Jude's Alternate), Kari Odden (Lynn Jordan's Alternate), Nathan Biletnikoff
- **MRC Members Absent:** Jamey Selleck, Paul Dinnel, Lynne Jordan, Jude Apple, Rachel Best, Todd Mitchell, Todd Woodard, Phyllis Bravinder
- **Others Attending:** Dana Oster, NWSC; Diane Hennebert, City of Anacortes (MRC Applicant); Brian Robson, Shell Puget Sound Refinery; Bob Seaman, Whatcom MRC; Bridget Trosin, WA SeaGrant; Richard Brocksmith, Skagit Watershed Council

Call to Order and Introduction: Sarah Tchang called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. and opened the meeting with introductions. Sarah noted there were not enough Skagit MRC members present to have a quorum.

Approval of Minutes: January 10, 2019, MRC meeting minutes were approved as written. The February 14 MRC meeting was cancelled due to the weather.

Public Comments: Richard Brocksmith provided a brief update on the Puget Sound Steelhead Recovery Plan. Federal, state, tribal, local, and private partners are in the process of developing a long-term recovery plan for Puget Sound steelhead. The draft plan is a fairly generic document that is now available [online](#) for public review. The final plan will be completed in 2019 and will include chapters with specific watershed recovery plans. The draft Skagit Watershed Steelhead Recovery Plan is now ready for vetting by the stakeholders. The Skagit Watershed Council has been tasked with facilitating the vetting process and comment period of this draft plan. To start the conversation with the stakeholders, regional and state experts will be presenting the draft plan on March 21 at the Skagit PUD from 10am-noon. After the draft plan is fully vetted by the stakeholders there will be a much broader public roll out with forums, presentations, and programs in the community.

Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Report: *Pete Haase*

There were two NWSC committee meetings since the last Skagit MRC meeting. Meeting highlights from the January and February NWSC meetings were emailed to MRC members.

- The Northwest Straits Initiative's annual retreat will take place March 21-22 at Camano Island.
- Puget Sound Day on the Hill is scheduled for May 14-16.
- All seven MRCs have letters signed by County Commissioners in support of the MRCs and continued state funding that were sent to the Legislators last month.
- Shada Sahandy is resigning from her position as the Executive Director of the Puget Sound Partnership. Laura Blackmore, the Deputy Director will likely be appointed to take her place.
- Federal funding for the Shore Friendly Program, an incentive program for landowners to remove armoring, recently ended. This funding was awarded to the Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) to provide educational workshops to shoreline landowners. The Shore Friendly Program is now being funded through the Washington State Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program (ESRP), but there is no longer an education and outreach component. The NWSF is seeking other sources of funding to continue providing education and outreach to shoreline landowners.

Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) Report: *Jay Lind*

- The NWSF board meeting was held last week. They voted for Jerry Masters to remain on the Board for one more year.
- The NWSF is campaigning to raise funds for interns/fellowships to support the MRCs similar to Clallam MRC's program.
- The Foundation continues to seek funding and support from the private sector.

- Skagit MRC was awarded \$6,000 from the MRC Opportunity Funds to implement a needs assessment and planning workshop for the Salish Sea Stewards Program. The NWSF drafted a contract with Joan Drinkwin to facilitate the workshop and to draft a restructuring plan for the Salish Sea Stewards program.

Camp Kirby Site Visit Discussion: *Pete Haase*

One of the Camp Kirby Board Members reached out to the Marine Resources Committee several months ago to inquire about a possible partnership. They were particularly interested in the Skagit MRC's Olympia oyster restoration work, Kids on the Beach, and forage fish surveys. Camp Kirby staff provided a tour of their property on Samish Island on February 26 for several MRC members and other volunteers. They explored lots of ideas for providing activities in support of various camp programs. Erin Walker, Executive Director of Campfire Samish, is the contact person for coordinating activities at Camp Kirby. One of the Salish Sea Stewards classes will be held at Camp Kirby on April 30. Pete said they identified two potential forage fish index sites at Camp Kirby where there is documented forage fish spawning, but no shade. Pete took some gravel samples and sent them to Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

MRC's 20th Anniversary Event Discussion: *All*

This year is Skagit MRC's 20th anniversary. Skagit MRC was officially established by the Board of County Commissioners on **May 4, 1999**. The Committee discussed several ideas for celebrating the MRC's anniversary.

- To help promote Skagit MRC's 20th anniversary, we could write one or two feature articles in the paper about the MRC and our 20 years of accomplishments. Tracy is seeking MRC members who might be interested in taking this task on.
- The Committee also talked about promoting Skagit MRC's 20th Anniversary as part of this year's Fidalgo Bay Day's event on August 24, 2019 and sponsoring a special activity at the event. Tracy is looking into the possibility of contracting with diver Laura Hanson to present her virtual reality diving experience in the Salish Sea. Laura has multiple headsets so several kids can check it out at the same time. Here is the link that talks a little bit about the 6-minute video "Virtual Salish Sea and Beyond" at the 2018 Greenlife Festival: <https://pixvana.com/vr-casting-powers-360-video-premiere-at-the-2018-greenlife-festival/>.
- Pete suggested hosting a community picnic in partnership with the Friends of Skagit Beaches and Salish Sea Stewards. The MRC could provide a cake and write articles to help promote the event.
- Bridget Trosin recommended planning an event with the County Commissioners. The event could be kicked off with a proclamation followed by personal stories from MRC members, volunteers and other groups who have worked with the MRC over the last 20 years. It could also include an ongoing slide show of volunteers and projects, or maybe a short video. Betsy volunteered to take the lead on this and work with Pete and Tracy to try to get something planned.

Pinto Abalone Letter of Support: *Tracy Alker*

Paul drafted a letter on behalf of the MRC in support of listing pinto abalone as endangered at the state level. Comment letters are due to the WDFW by **March 25, 2019**. Because the Skagit MRC is an advisory committee to the Skagit County Board of County Commissioners, a copy of the letter was shared with the Commissioners to make sure they didn't have any issues with the MRC sending it to WDFW. The NWSC submitted a letter of support as well. The consensus of the Committee was to approve the letter as written. No MRC members expressed any potential conflicts of interest.

Orca Recovery Outreach and Education: *All*

The Northwest Straits Foundation is the recipient of grant funding through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to implement actions to increase the availability of prey species for Southern Resident Killer Whales (SRKW) in the Northwest Straits region. The grant has many tasks and actions that included a restoration project, monitoring, prioritization of potential future restoration actions, and community outreach. The NWSF recently sent out a Request for Proposals for MRCs to conduct community outreach and education events in support of SRKW recovery. There is an average of \$2,000-\$3,000 available per MRC. MRCs are encouraged to work together. Proposals will be accepted, and funds distributed on a rolling basis beginning on **March 11, 2019**. All activities and reporting must be completed by **November 30, 2019**. The Committee discussed the following possibilities:

- **Skagit County Medicine Take Back Program Outreach:** Kari suggested partnering with the County Health Department's prescription medicine take-back program. Our messaging could focus on the environmental impacts of pharmaceuticals that are flushed down the drain into Puget Sound and into orcas. The Medicine Take Back program is a much better and safer alternative for families and orcas alike. The grant funds could be used to contract with

someone to develop the marketing materials such as banner ads for newspapers, magazines, social media, and radio ads, videos, public service announcement, etc.

- Skagit Watershed Council: Richard Brocksmitth said that the Skagit Watershed Council recently developed the “Skagit STEAM Educator Resource Guide,” as a comprehensive tool for educators to find information about current environmental and conservation education programs being offered to K-12 Youth in the Skagit watershed. The guide has been well received by the local school districts and is available on the Skagit Watershed Council’s website. Richard suggested there might be an opportunity for Skagit MRC to partner with some of these programs to help students make connections with the health of orcas.
- San Juan MRC: Nate pointed out that the San Juan MRC is doing a lot of really great things in the orca recovery effort and there might be an opportunity to partner with them on a project or apply for grants.
- Britt Slough Restoration Project: Nate suggested looking into the possibility of an orca recovery outreach project in connection with the Britt Slough Restoration Project or other similar habitat restoration projects happening in Skagit County. Richard said there is always a need to improve communications with those restoration projects and this orca recovery outreach might be a great opportunity to do that.
- Puget Sound Anglers: Jay commented that the Puget Sound Anglers is willing to donate to efforts for raising salmon to larger adult size for release to benefit fishing and orcas.

Project Status & Discussion

- Salish Sea Stewards: We currently have 19 people registered for the class. The application deadline was extended to March 15. The speaker schedule was shared with MRC members and posted on the MRC website. The public is welcome to come and listen to the speakers. The Friends of Skagit Beaches provided funding to purchase tote bags with the Salish Sea Logo to give to the presenters. Classes start March 19 – May 21, 2019. The subcommittee met with Joan Drinkwin, the Volunteer Program Coordinator, on February 26.
- Fidalgo Bay Day: Fidalgo Bay Resort has been reserved for next year’s Fidalgo Bay Day on August 24th, 2019. An ad will be placed in the Skagit Valley Recreation & Activity Guide insert in the Skagit Valley Herald that will be published on April 17 and run through August. The Friends of Skagit Beaches will once again host the very popular Discovery Passport Station activity with other sources of funding for the prizes. We will also have the beach seining activity and the Shannon Point Marine Center touch tank. This year’s event will be part of the Skagit MRC’s 20th Anniversary Celebration. We are hoping to contract with diver Laura Hanson to present her virtual reality diving experience in the Salish called “Virtual Salish See and Beyond.”
- Forage Fish Surveys: Surveys continue at our restoration sites and index sites. One was canceled in February due to the weather. Pete is looking into another potential index sit at Camp Kirby.
- Kids on the Beach Project: We now have a contract in place with UC Davis/The SeaDoc Society. The only caveat is that Mira will not be able to perform any of the tasks on the beach with the school groups like she did last year. Fortunately, Padilla Bay NERR staff has offered to assist with those tasks on the beach along with help from volunteers. Conway Middle School will likely participate again this year. Mira plants to reach out to La Conner Schools as well. We will try to schedule the beach days when the weather is a little bit warmer and hopefully more opportunities to find eggs. Pete said he gets a lot of requests from other groups with kids to participate in the forage fish surveys. He tries to accommodate those groups as much as possible, mostly under the umbrella of the Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve, since that is the area where they find the most eggs.
- Bowman Bay Restoration: Monthly plant maintenance work parties with the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group will start sometime in the spring and continue through the summer. Jason Morgan recently added Bowman Bay to the MyCoast App to upload beach photos to document changes over time: <https://mycoast.org/wa>.
- Pinto Abalone Recovery: Surveys were conducted in February. The Puget Sound Restoration Fund will provide a quarterly report in April.
- Olympia Oyster Restoration: Paul recently completed a report on Olympia Oyster Restoration in Fidalgo Bay and Cypress Island which has been shared with the MRC and NWSC and posted on both websites. The report summarizes all of the work that has been done over the last 16 years. Information from the report was included in the online Encyclopedia of Puget Sound. Field work will start up again in April or May 2019.
- Kayak Kelp Surveys: Dana is leading the effort in the development of a Puget Sound wide kelp conservation and recovery plan that started at the end of 2017. MRCs, scientists, NOAA, county reps, USGS, and six tribal reps attended the Kelp Recovery Workshop at Padilla Bay on February 28 (the third workshop in the series). Phyllis attended the

workshop on behalf of the Skagit MRC. The focus of the workshop was on high-priority data gaps and identifying actions to address data gaps. An MRC kelp monitoring workshop will be held April 18 at the Maritime Center in Port Townsend. Surveys will start up again in June. Suzanne shared graphs that showed the results of kelp surveys in Skagit County. Kelp beds appear to be increasing at the Shannon Point site. Kelp beds at the Coffin Rocks site appear to be pretty stable. A kelp monitoring poster is available to share at upcoming events like Fidalgo Bay Day.

2019-2020 MRC Grant Project Idea Discussion: All

The Committee discussed our current MRC grant funded projects and whether or not we would like to continue these same projects under the new 2019-2020 MRC Grant or if we want to consider new projects for this funding. The projects funded under the current 2018-2019 MRC Grant include:

- **MRC Operations:** \$23,900
- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** \$1,900
- **Salish Sea Stewards:** \$19,900
- **Kids on the Beach:** \$8,900
- **Pinto Abalone Recovery:** \$18,000
- **Bowman Bay Restoration Plant Maintenance:** \$2,400
- **Total Grant Amount= \$75,000**

Because we did not have a quorum no official decisions were made regarding project proposals for the 2019-2020 MRC Grant. However, the Committee expressed support to continue the same projects under the new MRC Grant. The MRC grant application includes a simplified logic model to help guide the desired outcomes and the measurable ways to reach those outcomes. The metrics will help evaluate the project's success and will be used to help paint the bigger picture of regional impacts. The MRC Grant proposals are due in June. Although it is anticipated that the total grant amount will be around \$75,000 again, the Committee was encouraged to take into consideration what we could get done if we end up getting less money, as well as a wish list of what we could do with additional funding. Tracy reminded the Committee that the Northwest Straits Foundation is available to help the MRC apply for other grants or donations if we have specific projects we would like to get funded. There is also the MRC Opportunity Fund that we can apply for.

New Project Ideas for Consideration:

- If additional funding becomes available, Pete suggested the MRC consider installing interpretive at the Samish Flower Farm beach in partnership with the Skagit Land Trust. It is one of the few places in Skagit County with public beach access. The tidelands are owned by the Padilla Bay Reserve. The habitat is unique and would provide an excellent opportunity for public education and outreach.

MRC Participation at Upcoming Events:

- May 16-May 19 (10am – 6pm)- Anacortes Boat Show: Need MRC volunteers to co-host the Be Whale Wise Booth with the San Juan and Whatcom MRCs.
- June 1 - 2 (10am-6pm)- Anacortes Waterfront Festival: Pete is thinking about reserving a table at the Anacortes Water Festival and is looking for MRC volunteers to host the MRC display for half a day. The MRC would share the booth with the Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve and the Friends of Skagit Beaches.

Miscellaneous Events and Announcements: All

- Friends of Skagit Beaches Annual Winter Lecture Series: The next lecture will be held **March 15, 2019** at the NW Education Services District Building in Anacortes, 7pm-8:30pm. "Puget Sound Mussel Monitoring Long-term Active Biological Monitoring of Nearshore Contaminants" presented by Jennifer Lanksbury, Wildlife Biologist, WDFW. The last lecture will be held **April 12, 2019**, "Plankton of the Land: Mosses, Lichens, and Fungi in Pacific Northwest Forests" presented by Kem Luther, PhD. The lectures are free and open to the public.
- Orca Network Presentation- **March 20**, at noon at the WSU Extension Facility. "Preventing Extinction of the Southern Resident Orcas."
- Washington Sea Grant's Green Crab Monitoring Training for Volunteers- **March 20**, 9am-3pm at Padilla Bay: <https://wsg.washington.edu/event/crab-team-training-pbnerr-19/>
- Coastal Observation and Seabird Survey Team (COASST) Beached Bird Training Session: **March 24**, 11am-5pm at the Stanwood Senior Center (7430 276th St NW, Stanwood). The data collected by volunteers will be used to establish the

baseline pattern of bird mortality on North Pacific beaches and help address important marine conservation issues and protect marine resources. RSVP coasst@uw.edu or (206) 221-6893.

- **Skagit Watershed Council Meeting- March 27**, from 10am to noon at the Skagit Public Utility District building in Mount Vernon. They will be discussing the Draft Puget Sound Steelhead Recovery Plan.
- **'Kids Can Save the Planet' Free Documentary Series** at the Lincoln Theater www.kidscansavethplanet.com. The award winning documentary "Plastic Is Forever" by Dylan D'Haeze, a 13-year-old filmmaker from the San Juan Islands, is the first film in the series that will be shown at the Lincoln Theater in Mount Vernon on **March 28, 6:30pm**.
- **2019 Puget Sound Bird Observatory Wetland Secretive Bird Monitoring Project**: The Puget Sound Bird Observatory is looking for volunteers to help monitor wetland birds in Skagit County. Surveyor training for Skagit and Snohomish survey locations will take place **March 30, 2019**, 9:30am-2:00pm, at the Stanwood PUD Building. RSVP: Cindy Easterson at eastersonfamily@msn.com or call (425) 876-1055.
- **Marine Biotoxin Volunteer Monitoring Program 2019 Training**: The Skagit Conservation District is seeking volunteers to support monitoring local recreational shellfish harvesting beaches for Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning (PSP) and Diarrhetic Shellfish Poisoning (DSP). 2019 training dates: **April 9** from 1pm to 4pm at the Padilla Bay Research Reserve and **April 11** from 2:45pm to 4:15pm on the beach at March Point. Pre-registration required by April 4. Contact Kristi Carpenter, Skagit Conservation District @ (360) 428-4313 or email: kristi@skagitcd.org.
- **NOAA has a new mapping tool for endangered species habitat**: https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/feature-story/new-app-makes-endangered-species-habitat-easy-find?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery
- **San Juan MRC's Plastic Free Salish Sea documentary**: [Click here](#)
- **The Washington Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) Boat Disposal Sites Map**: WDNR's Vessel Turn In Program and the Defenders of Wildlife have been in collaboration to create a map of boat disposal sites throughout western Washington.
- **The Pacific Marine and Estuarine Fish Habitat Partnership (PMEP) Request for Proposals**: The Pacific Marine and Estuarine Fish Habitat Partnership has issued a Request for Proposals for nearshore science support. They are seeking a contractor to conduct literature reviews, compile available information, and collaborate with regional experts including the PMEP nearshore regional working group to develop a "State of the Knowledge" report on West Coast nearshore habitats. The full RFP can be found at the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission website.
- **Liz Lovelett Appointed to Washington State Senate**: Jay shared the news that Liz Lovelett (former MRC member and Anacortes City Council member) was recently appointed to replace Kevin Ranker in the Washington state senate. Liz signed the letter in support of continuing state funding for the Skagit MRC.

MRC Membership Application – Diane Hennebert

Unfortunately, the Skagit MRC did not have a quorum to vote on Diane's application. The vote will need to be postponed until the next MRC meeting on April 11 or vote by email.

The meeting adjourned at 11:00am. The next MRC meeting will be held April 11, 2019 at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort in Anacortes (4701 Fidalgo Bay Road).



SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the April 11, 2019, Skagit County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) meeting, held at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort in Anacortes

- **MRC Members Attending:** Sarah Tchang, Jay Lind, Pete Haase, Tracy Alker, Paul Dinnel, Lynne Jordan, Jude Apple, Betsy Stevenson, Bob Weathers (Phyllis Bravinder's Alternate), Nicole Casper (Todd Mitchell's Alternate), Darla Gay Smith (Rachel Best's Alternate), Jodi Bluhm (Todd Woodard's Alternate)
- **MRC Members Absent:** Jamey Selleck, Phyllis Bravinder, Todd Woodard, Todd Mitchell, Nathan Biletnikoff, Rachel Best
- **Others Attending:** Diane Hennebert, City of Anacortes (MRC Applicant); Jason Morgan, NWSF; Nicole Jordan, NWSC; Kari Odden (Lynne Jordan's Alternate); Wayne Huseby, FOSB/FBARCSC; Amy Eberling, Salish Sea Stewards/Salish Sea School

Call to Order and Introduction: Sarah Tchang called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. and opened the meeting with introductions.

Approval of Minutes: March 14, 2019, MRC meeting minutes were approved as written after changes were made to the meeting attendance.

Public Comments: Jude Apple has officially accepted the position as the new Director at Padilla Bay NERR.

Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Report: *Pete Haase*

The NWSC did not have a meeting in March. Pete provided a brief report on the Northwest Straits Initiative's annual retreat which took place March 21-22 at Camano Island. Below are a few highlights from the retreat:

- Around 25 people attended including representatives from each MRC, NWSC Staff, Northwest Straits Foundation Staff, and gubernatorial appointees. Most of the MRC representatives were new to the NWSC.
- The retreat was facilitated by Hilary Wilkinson.
- There were a lot of group discussions and a few breakout sessions.
- The main accomplishment prioritizing and clarifying some of the items in the NWSI Strategic Plan.
- The retreat provided a great opportunity for networking and reminiscing about the NWSI and the progress and changes that have been made over the last 20 years.
- Pete thought it would be helpful to have a retreat or workshop that focused more on the MRC members and the work of the MRCs to help initiate more collaboration among the MRCs.
- The next NWSC meeting will be held at the Maritime Center in Port Townsend on April 26 at 10:30am.

Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) Report: *Jay Lind and Jason Morgan*

- Don and Tarrell recently met with Shell to discuss Skagit MRC projects that Shell might like to help support. Shell expressed interest in the Kids on the Beach program. They are still working out the details.
- The Foundation is in the process of finalizing a Near Term Action grant proposal in partnership with the University of Washington (UW), the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), and the Friends of San Juans to monitor the effects of shoreline armoring and shoreline restoration at several sites around Puget Sound including Bowman Bay. We've now completed 3 years of collecting monitoring data at Bowman Bay. This grant will help fund the remaining two years of monitoring at Bowman Bay so that we will have a total 5 years of monitoring data. Researchers at UW will synthesize the data and write up a case study.
- Next NWSF meeting will be April 25 in Port Townsend to make it easier for Caroline to attend.

Project Status & Discussion

- Fidalgo Bay Day: Fidalgo Bay Resort has been reserved for next year's Fidalgo Bay Day on August 24th, 2019. This year's event will be part of the Skagit MRC's 20th Anniversary Celebration. Planning is currently underway.
- Bowman Bay Restoration: Monthly plant maintenance work parties with the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group will take place from 10:00am to 1:00pm on the following dates: May 17, June 21, July 12, August 16, and September 20. The work party schedule has been posted on the MRC website and in "The Wave."
- Forage Fish Surveys: Surveys continue at our restoration sites and index sites at Ship Harbor, Samish Island, and Similk Bay. Pete is now waiting for approval from WDFW regarding his proposal to add two new index sites at Camp Kirby.
- Kids on the Beach Project: 50 eighth grade students from Conway and 50 eighth grade students from La Conner are participating in the Kids on the Beach program this year. Padilla Bay NERR's Education Department has joined forces and will accompany Mira during the classroom sessions and will be in charge of the beach activities. Both groups will conduct surf smelt surveys and beach seining like we did last year. The beach activities for Conway students will take place on May 1 at the Fidalgo Bay Resort and on May 2 at Lone Tree Point for La Conner students. Volunteers will be recruited to help with the beach activities. The Science Symposium for both school groups will take place on May 10 at Padilla Bay. Padilla Bay NERR expressed interest in the possibility of partnering with the MRC to host the Kids on the Beach program in the future.
- Pinto Abalone Recovery: The Puget Sound Restoration Fund (PSRF) and WDFW divers completed site surveys and genetic sampling at three of the six abalone outplant sites in Skagit County over the last three months. They collected tissue samples to get a better understanding of the genetic diversity as it relates to original hatchery outplants and wild populations. Final surveys were conducted on the Young Abalone Module experiment. There appears to be no difference in survival rates between cohorts outplanted at 9 months old and 15 months old. This is good news because outplanting abalone at a younger age means less hatchery time will be required. Abalone are increasing in size and density at the outplant sites. However, we still have not seen any signs of natural recruitment. Paul said that pinto abalone recovery will be a much slower process compared to Olympia oyster restoration in Fidalgo Bay. Additional abalone will no longer be outplanted at the two sites where survival rates were really low. Divers set up two new outplant sites in Skagit County which will be seeded with approximately 1000 abalone of two year classes sometime in April. PSRF is also doing pinto abalone recovery work in the San Juan County as well. Paul plans to go out in the field at least once or twice this year with PSRF.
- Olympia Oyster Restoration: Field season will start up again in a couple of months. Volunteers will collect around 20 cultch bags to monitor oyster settlement and will deploy new cultch bags to monitor next year. After collecting data for the last 20 years, we now have really good population estimates and will no longer need to conduct annual surveys of all the plots. From here on out we will start to monitor at 3 to 5 year intervals instead of every year. Olympia oyster restoration efforts in Fidalgo Bay have been very successful. There is now a sustainable spawning population at around 3 million oysters. Most successful areas are where shell was added to enhance oyster habitat for oyster larvae settlement. This year Paul will work with Jude to look for other potential locations for native oyster restoration in Padilla Bay, particularly in the southern channels near Bay View State Park where there is a Pacific oyster bed. According to historical records, there used to be an estimated 2,000 acres of Olympia oysters in Padilla Bay and Samish Bay. Paul has also been working with Brady Blake from WDFW over the last two years to look into the possibility of transferring some of the adult oysters from Fidalgo Bay over to the east side of Marchs Point.
- Kayak Kelp Surveys: An MRC kelp monitoring workshop will be held April 18 at the Maritime Center in Port Townsend. Surveys will start up again in June. Bob Weathers and Phyllis Bravinder cannot attend this year, so Tracy is looking for another representative from the Skagit MRC to attend. Bob said that Brad Smith, the lead volunteer for the kayak kelp surveys at Shannon Point, can represent Skagit at the workshop.
- Salish Sea Stewards: There are now 21 people taking the class. Classes are mostly held every Tuesday from 1:00pm to 5:00pm and are going really well so far. We have a lot of really great speakers. The speaker schedule is posted on the MRC website: www.skagitmrc.org and the lectures are open to the public. The next class will be held Friday, April 19, in partnership with WSU Snohomish Beach Watchers. The focus of the class will be on climate change. Jay said he spoke with Shannon Blue, the Environmental Program Coordinator at Skagit Valley Community College. She agreed to post the speaker schedule around the college to attract younger people to the program. Joan provides all of the presentations, the speaker survey, pictures, and other training materials for the Salish Sea Stewards online in a dropbox.

- **Salish Sea Stewards Restructuring Plan:** Skagit MRC was recently awarded \$6,000 from the MRC Opportunity Funds from the NWSF to implement a needs assessment and planning workshop for the Salish Sea Stewards Program. Joan Drinkwin has been contracted to facilitate the workshop and to draft a restructuring plan for the Salish Sea Stewards program. Joan will be meeting with the Salish Sea Stewards long-range planning committee on April 25 at 10am. Jay asked MRC members what they would like to see from the Salish Sea Stewards long-term planning workshop. Below summarizes some of the thoughts that were discussed.
 - It is difficult to find grants to run a volunteer program like the Salish Sea Stewards. The program will fall apart unless there is at least a part-time paid position to oversee it.
 - Consider getting paid sponsors from large Corporations like Boeing.
 - Look at partnering with a larger organization that has a local chapter like Surfriders that can provide resources and guidance.
 - Padilla Bay might soon be able to play a larger role in supporting the Salish Sea Stewards training program in addition to providing the facility and infrastructure. However, they most likely would not be able to help with volunteer coordination.

Guardians of the Sea Program: Amy Eberling

Amy Eberling is currently enrolled in the Salish Sea Stewards training this year and was really impressed with the work of the NWSI and the Skagit MRC after learning about it in class. Amy is in the early stages of developing a non-profit for 9-12 graders called The Salish Sea School. This School is set to open a program for 9-12 graders in June 2020 called "Guardians of the Sea (GOTS)." It will launch out of Anacortes. GOTS is a boat-based exploration of the Salish Sea that will foster cognitive, social, & emotional learning through scientific inquiry, citizen science projects, and mindfulness in nature practices. The School will be similar to a summer day camp and each session will be 4-days long/6hrs per day. It will be a small group of around 5 students on a 25ft boat. The overall goal is to provide opportunities for youth to become exposed to the Salish Sea and thus develop a deep appreciation to initiate a personal desire for its conservation. Amy is currently working on developing relationships with any organizations/professionals in the area that could benefit from any sort of on-the-water data collection/monitoring/etc. from the youth citizen science projects she will be leading. The projects lining up so far are a tufted puffin survey near Smith Island and marine plastic sampling in partnership with Peter Hodum at the University of Puget Sound. The students will be collecting long-term data sets that will be sent to Peter for analyses. Amy is looking for suggestions for good monitoring locations for marine plastic sampling near the Skyline Marina where they will be launching. In addition to GOTS, Amy would also like to do monthly marine-inspired gatherings for youth. She recently applied for two grants. There will also be a fee for students to attend the class. Jude suggested contacting the Anacortes HS Green Club. There is also the Youth Earth Summit at Padilla Bay every December.

MRC's 20th Anniversary Event Planning Update: Betsy

This year is Skagit MRC's 20th anniversary. Skagit MRC was officially established by the Board of County Commissioners on May 4, 1999. Betsy is working on a proclamation in recognition of the Skagit MRC's 20th anniversary that will get signed by the Board of County Commissioners on June 18, 2019 at 3:00pm. Pete will reach out to several people who have been involved with the MRC over the years to come and say a few words. Betsy is looking for ideas from the Committee regarding the accomplishments we would like to highlight at the celebration. Tracy will get a cake and put together a slide show of photos that will run in the background as part of the celebration. Pete will work with the Friends of Skagit Beaches to plan a community picnic as part of the MRC's 20th anniversary celebration and volunteer appreciation. Skagit MRC's 20th anniversary celebration will also be a part of this year's Fidalgo Bay Day. Skagit MRC will host a virtual reality diving experience with Laura Hanson. Tracy is currently working on a contract agreement with Laura.

Orca Recovery Outreach and Education: All

The Northwest Straits Foundation recently sent out a Request for Proposals for MRCs to conduct community outreach and education events in support of orca recovery with grant funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. There is a total of \$18,900 available for all MRCs (approximately \$2,000-\$3,000 per MRC). MRCs are encouraged to work together. All activities and reporting must be completed by November 30, 2019. The Committee discussed the following possibilities:

- **Skagit County Medicine Take Back Program Outreach:** Kari and Tracy recently met with the County Health Department staff about potentially partnering with them to help with the outreach for their prescription medicine take-back program. The Health Department was very supportive. Our messaging would focus on the environmental impacts of pharmaceuticals that are flushed down the drain into Puget Sound and into orcas. Tracy is waiting to hear

back from Clallam MRC to see if they might be interested in partnering since they have a similar medicine take back program. Kari got a cost estimate from a firm for developing the marketing materials, creating a video and social media campaign, and developing a countertop box design for around \$7,200. Kari will explore other options that will help reduce the costs. MRC members expressed concern about measuring behavioral change with a social media campaign especially in such a short timeframe.

- **Action Item:** The consensus of the MRC was to apply for the NWSF funding for the Skagit County Medicine Take Back Program Outreach proposal. Kari will draft a proposal with different cost option scenarios for the social media campaign to promote Skagit County's medicine take back program and reduce the amount of pharmaceuticals entering Puget Sound. The proposal will be routed to the MRC for approval before submitting it to the NWSF.
- **Friends of San Juans Orca Outreach Presentation:** Friends of the San Juans can provide a 1.5-2 hour presentation covering orca biology, prey needs and limiting factors, impacts from pollution (vessel traffic, exhaust fumes, oil spills), Task Force info, current legislation, and will include actions that citizens could take to help. They did a live stream for one of the sessions and it is available to watch here: <https://sanjuans.org/2019/03/19/2019-protect-what-you-love-2/>. Lovel Pratt, a San Juan MRC member, and Deborah Giles, a researcher at Friday Harbor Labs would be the presenters. The cost to do the presentation would be around \$750 plus travel expenses. Lisa suggested inviting other partner organizations to host a table to demonstrate actions they are taking that are also benefitting Orca and prey species. The presenters are available Thursday evenings and Fridays. June is orca awareness month! Several other MRCs have expressed interest in doing this as well. The only requirement of the MRC would be to schedule the event, reserve the facility, invite other organizations to host tables, help promote the event, and just show up. Betsy suggested hosting the event in Mount Vernon or Burlington to reach a different audience other than Anacortes.
 - **Action Item:** In addition to applying for the NWSF funding for the Skagit County Medicine Take Back Program Outreach for orca protection, the consensus of the MRC was to also apply for NWSF funding for the Friends of San Juans Orca Outreach Presentation. We will not need to fill out an application for the Orca Outreach Presentation. Tracy will coordinate with Lisa to schedule the presentation in Skagit County and will also try to reserve a facility somewhere in Mount Vernon.

Stormwater Grant Discussion: All

The Northwest Straits Foundation recently sent out a Request for Proposals to the Skagit, Snohomish, and Island County MRCs for the Boeing Stormwater Grant. There is a total of \$30k available. The deadline for this application is May 1, 2019. Awards must be spent out by October 31, 2019, unless an extension is requested and approved. Collaborations and partnerships in the community are encouraged but the funds cannot be used as pass-through to other organizations. Skagit County can now be included in Objective #1 (Green Infrastructure Solutions for Capturing and Treating Stormwater runoff) in addition to Objective#3 (Promote the use of green infrastructure solutions for improving water quality) and Objective #5 (Conduct environmental monitoring at three sites). Jason said that for Objective #5, as long as we have a monitoring plan in place by October 31, the volunteer training and monitoring can extend beyond that deadline. The Committee discussed the following ideas brought forward by Diane:

- **Objective #1:** The Fidalgo Trail Riders, a local mountain bike club, is proposing to construct a bike skills course on top of the recently decommissioned dump site in the Anacortes Community Forest Lands. The bike skills course has wide community support and is one of the few activities that would be allowed at the site. The bike course will be built sometime this summer. Rain gardens could be installed at the low ends of the bike skills course to provide treatment to the runoff. Because water cannot be infiltrated on the site due to the cap on the landfill, impermeable liners would be placed under the rain gardens. The treated water would flow into the existing swales that help drain the cap. The raingardens could potentially be installed by volunteers. Interpretive signs about the raingardens could also be installed to help educate the bike club community about stormwater issues and actions to minimize the harmful impacts. The bike club has offered to sign a maintenance agreement taking on responsibility for maintenance of the bike park. For more information, here is a link to the Fidalgo Trail Riders website: <http://fidalgotrailriders.org/>, and the section regarding the proposed bike park: http://fidalgotrailriders.org/?page_id=2.
- **Objective #3:** This Objective requires collaboration with the other MRCs. The MRC could partner with government stakeholders (stormwater coordinators, planning/building officials, street/storm crews, possibly some elected officials), contractors/landscaping professionals, plant nurseries, environmental groups, HOAs, residents with an interest in LID, etc to build a widespread rain garden network. It could be a one stop shop for all things rain gardens. Ideally, the MRC would establish some kind of central spot where people could get information about rain garden functions, construction requirements, maintenance requirements, permits/regulations depending on jurisdiction, etc.

We could also have a series of workshops. One could be aimed at contractors and landscapers and provide information on rain garden construction requirements and maintenance. Another could be for the general public and cover what rain gardens do and how to design them for your yard. The final workshop could be a gathering of community leaders, MRC members and green infrastructure experts to brainstorm ideas to improve the network and expand outreach. We would reach out to other MRCs to share our strategies, successes and lessons learned.

- **Objective #5:** The MRC could partner with the bike club and the Anacortes High School Green Club to monitor runoff at the new bike skills course site and downstream wetlands. There could also be some opportunities to bring in other local environmental organizations to take part in monitoring.

➤ **Action Item:** Pete will work with Diane and Wayne to draft a proposal for the stormwater grant.

MRC Membership Application – Diane Hennebert

The Committee voted by consensus to make the recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to appoint Diane Hennebert to the MRC. There were no objections. Diane will represent the City of Anacortes. Diane has a strong background in stormwater and water quality issues and currently oversees the NPDES permit for the City of Anacortes.

Miscellaneous Events and Announcements: All

- **April 17- Final Fidalgo Bay Stakeholder Review Meeting at 1pm** at the ESD building in Anacortes, all are welcome. The Washington Department of Natural Resources will be mailing out the draft Fidalgo Bay Management Plan this week for review.
- **April 25- Mount Vernon High School Science Night:** Betsy will host the Skagit MRC display and stormwater golf game that focuses on the impacts of stormwater pollution on orcas and what folks can do to help. She will also bring Fidalgo Bay Day promotional flyers.
- **April 25-27- Pacific Estuarine Research Society Conference:** This Pacific northwest and Canadian Pacific estuarine ecosystems conference will be hosted at the Fidalgo Bay Resort Convention Center in Anacortes on April 25-27. The theme of the conference will be "Performing Science in Today's Changing World". Registration for the conference is online. For more information: <http://www.pers-erf.org/>.
- **Shannon Point Shoreline Restoration Discussion:** Paul recently met with John Lunsford to get an update on the City's plans for the trail extension through Shannon Point Marine Center's property to Washington Park and to see if shoreline restoration at Shannon Point might once again be a viable option. Paul will continue these discussions with the City and NWSF to see if it would be possible to make the Shannon Point Shoreline Restoration Project happen, so stay tuned.
- **Puget Sound Anglers Update:** Jay reported that Puget Sound Anglers has funding available to donate towards efforts for raising Chinook salmon to larger adult size for release to benefit fishing and orcas. They are currently looking at three possible locations to do that including: Bowman Bay, Secret Harbor, and one other location. Cooke Aquaculture offered to provide a net pen, the food distribution system, and the food itself to help support this effort.

The meeting adjourned at 11:18am. The next MRC meeting will be held May 9, 2019 at the Skagit County Administration Building in Mount Vernon (1800 Continental Place).



SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the May 9, 2019, Skagit County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) meeting, held at the Skagit County Administration Building in Mount Vernon

- **MRC Members Attending:** Sarah Tchang, Jay Lind, Pete Haase, Tracy Alker, Paul Dinnel, Kari Odden (Lynne Jordan's Alternate), Jude Apple, Diane Hennebert, Betsy Stevenson, Rachel Best, Nathan Biletnikoff
- **MRC Members Absent:** Jamey Selleck, Phyllis Bravinder, Todd Mitchell, Todd Woodard
- **Others Attending:** Wayne Huseby, FOSB/FBARCSC; Jason Quigley, SCPW; Tara Naylor, SCPW; Bridget Trosin, WA Sea Grant; Jennifer Herron, FOSB

Call to Order and Introduction: Sarah Tchang called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. and opened the meeting with introductions.

Approval of Minutes: April 11, 2019, MRC meeting minutes were approved as written

Public Comments: Wayne Huseby commented that Governor Jay Inslee recently signed legislation to protect southern resident orcas.

Skagit County's Stormwater Management Program: *Jason Quigley*

Jason Quigley provided a brief overview of the County's Stormwater Management Program and the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. The NPDES permit is a federal requirement of the Clean Water Act that regulates stormwater pollution. The Department of Ecology is the NPDES permitting authority in Washington State. Skagit County was issued its first NPDES Phase II permit in 2007. The next phase of the permit will be issued in August. The County's NPDES permit area is based on population or intensiveness of activity. The other nearby municipalities have their own permit boundaries. Skagit County's stormwater drainage systems experience runoff from very diverse land uses including agriculture, residential, commercial, and industrial. Much of the agricultural land in Skagit County is exempt from NPDES permit requirements because they are not large enough operations to meet the permit criteria. The County's Stormwater Management Program Plan is updated annually and includes the efforts that are being made to meet the NPDES Phase II permit requirements. The [Draft 2019 report](#) is now available on the County website. The County focuses on the following areas to help improve stormwater quality: public involvement, education and outreach, runoff control from development, illicit discharge detection and elimination, and improving the County's own operations and maintenance activities. Skagit County currently only has 1 and 0.5 FTEs working under the Stormwater Management Program with support from other departments. In addition to staffing a table at Fidalgo Bay Day, Jason expressed interest in exploring other opportunities to partner with Skagit MRC in the future.

Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Report: *Pete Haase*

The last NWSC meeting took place at the Maritime Center in Port Townsend on April 26th. Below are some of the highlights.

- NWSC officers were elected: Alan Clark (Clallam MRC) was elected NWSC Chair and Elsa Schwarz (Island MRC) was elected NWSC Vice-Chair.
- The NWSI Five Year Strategic Plan is almost ready for release.
- The Puget Sound Partnership is working on a communications plan. An Adhoc Communications Committee has been formed for the NWSI and they are looking for MRC members to help. Please contact Tracy or Sasha if interested. Pete noted that the San Juan MRC has been doing a really good job at marketing themselves.
- Jeff Taylor (Jefferson MRC) gave an interesting presentation on using satellite imagery to monitor kelp.
- The 2018 NWSI Annual Report is now available on the NWSI website. <http://www.nwstraits.org/media/2757/2018-nwsi-annual-report-lo-res.pdf>
- The 2019 NWSI conference will be held in Everett this year on November 15-16. Contact Sasha if you would like to be involved in the planning process. They are also looking for conference session ideas.
- MRC members are encouraged to attend other County MRC meetings:
 - **Snohomish MRC Meetings:** 3rd Wednesday each month, 6:30pm-8:30pm at the Snohomish County Campus (3000 Rockefeller Ave, Everett, on the 6th floor of the Robert J. Drewel Building in room 6A0).

- **Whatcom MRC Meetings:** 1st Thursday each month, 5pm-7pm at the PW Civic Building, Garden Level Conference Room
- **Clallam MRC Meetings:** 3rd Monday each month, 5:30 pm to 7:30 PM at Port Angeles Board of County Commissioners Hearing Room, located at 223 E 4th St, Port Angeles.
- **Jefferson MRC Meetings:** 1st Tuesday each month, 6pm-8pm at the Port Commissioners Bldg, 333 Benedict St, Port Townsend.
- **San Juan MRC Meetings:** 1st Thursday each month, 8:30am-11:00am at The Grange, 152 First Street, Friday Harbor.
- **Island MRC Meetings:** 1st Tuesday each month, 3:00pm-5pm at the County Annex Building, Coupeville. Sometimes the meetings are held at the Camano Island Library (848 N Sunrise Blvd).
- The next NWSC meeting will be a WebEx on May 31 at 11:00am.
- June 28th NWSC meeting in Everett we will need to present one of our projects.

Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) Report: *Jay Lind*

- Nan McKay is the newest Foundation board member.
- The NWSF is asking the MRCs to create a wish list of projects that we would like to get funding for.
- The MRC Opportunity Funds deadline for the Innovation Fund (\$10,000) and for three fellowships (200 hours each) has been extended to June 1, 2019. Awards must be spent within a year. Fellowship funding must be spent by December 1, 2019.
- The NWSF applied for and will likely receive \$10,000 from Shell Puget Sound Refinery to help support the Kids on the Beach program from September 2019 - September 2020.

Project Status & Discussion

- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** Fidalgo Bay Resort has been reserved for next year's Fidalgo Bay Day on August 24th, 2019. Planning is currently underway. Paul met with Taylor Shellfish who agreed to donate shellfish for complimentary samples.
- **Bowman Bay Restoration:** Monthly plant maintenance work parties with the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group will take place from 10:00am to 1:00pm on the following dates: May 17, June 21, July 12, August 16, and September 20. The work party schedule has been posted on the MRC website and in "The Wave."
- **Forage Fish Surveys:** Surveys continue at our restoration sites and index sites at Ship Harbor, Samish Island, and Similk Bay. A school group will be visiting Camp Kirby in October and has expressed interest in science related activities. Pete offered to assist the school group with conducting a forage fish survey if they are interested. Pete and several other volunteers will also be working with Island View Elementary School to conduct a forage fish survey at Fidalgo Bay on June 14. It will be the school's third year participating in forage fish surveys at Fidalgo Bay.
- **Kids on the Beach:** 25 volunteers assisted 50 eighth grade students from Conway with beach activities at the Fidalgo Bay Resort on May 1 and 50 eighth grade students from La Conner at Lone Tree Point on May 2. The Science Symposium for both school groups will take place on May 10 at Padilla Bay.
- **Pinto Abalone Recovery:** The Puget Sound Restoration Fund (PSRF) and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) divers completed surveys in Skagit County over the last three months. Paul went out in the field with the PSRF and WDFW dive crews to set up two new outplant sites in the western Fidalgo Bay area which were seeded with approximately 1000 abalone of two year classes. They also installed new underwater camera setups to see what kind of predators are interested in the abalone. So far they have observed a lot of interest in the abalone from kelp greenling, but no smoking guns. They are looking into installing some bait traps with abalone to see what kind of predators they attract.
- **Olympia Oyster Restoration:** Sampling season is starting up again. Paul retrieved two of the 20 cultch bags in Fidalgo Bay to monitor. So far the results indicate there was low to moderately low native oyster settlement last year. Volunteers will collect the rest of the cultch bags to monitor oyster settlement in Fidalgo Bay soon and will deploy 20 new cultch bags that will be monitored next year. Paul gave a presentation on the Olympia Oyster Restoration and Pinto Abalone Restoration projects as part of the Salish Sea Stewards training program. Paul went out with Whatcom MRC to help with their native oyster restoration project in Chuckanut Bay. So far it looks like the Olympia oysters have had good recruitment and survival rates.
- **Kayak Kelp Surveys:** An MRC kelp monitoring workshop was held April 18 at the Maritime Center in Port Townsend. Two of our kelp survey volunteers, Brad Smith and John Freeto, attended the workshop on behalf of the MRC. A conference call has been scheduled for Wednesday, May 15, 3-4pm to discuss motorized boat kelp monitoring. MRC

members can contact Dana Oster if interested in participating in the discussion: oster@nwstraits.org. Surveys will likely start up again in June or July.

- **Salish Sea Stewards:** There are 22 people taking the training this year. The final class and potluck will be held May 21 from 1:00pm to 5:00pm at Padilla Bay. Pete is organizing a 'volunteer program fair' at the culminating class. Class participants will get a chance to visit with representatives from different volunteer organizations. The potluck will start around 4:00pm. MRC members are invited to attend. We have finally reached full capacity with the Volgistics program for reporting volunteer hours. The Volgistics program is paid for and maintained by Padilla Bay. We will need to start looking into the possibility of expanding the Volgistics program in partnership with Padilla Bay. The date of the Salish Sea Stewards Planning Workshop has been set for June 13, 2019 at Padilla Bay from 9am to 4pm. Volunteer coordinators from other programs, Salish Sea Stewards, and MRC members will be invited to the workshop to share their insights. Joan Drinkwin will be facilitating the workshop. Joan is also working on the Needs Assessment survey that will be sent to volunteers prior to the workshop. Results of the survey and workshop will help develop the restructuring plan and recommendations that will be brought to the MRC for deliberation.

Stormwater Grant Proposal Update: Diane

Diane, Wayne and Pete submitted a proposal to the Northwest Straits Foundation for the Boeing Stormwater Grant. If approved, this will be a joint project between the Skagit MRC and the City of Anacortes. Diane and Pete will be the MRC Project Co-Leads. The proposal is for a total of \$10,000 and includes the following highlights:

- Identify five locations for rain gardens and/or bioswales in the City of Anacortes stormwater drainage system and develop conceptual designs for each project.
- Signage will be installed at a decommissioned dump site that will be repurposed as a bike skills course to increase public awareness and understanding of stormwater impacts and the benefits of raingardens.

Administrative Report: Tracy

- The June 13th MRC meeting had to be rescheduled because it conflicted with the Salish Sea Stewards Workshop. Per consensus of the Committee, the MRC meeting was rescheduled for June 18th, from 1:30pm to 2:30pm at the Skagit County Administration Building in Mount Vernon. The MRC's 20th Anniversary Celebration will follow just after the meeting at 3:00pm in the Commissioner's Hearing Room.
- 2019-2020 MRC Grant: State funding doubled from \$227,000/year to \$455,000/year for the 2019-2021 biennium and will be split equally between the seven MRCs. The MRCs will each receive \$65,000 state funds and \$26,000 federal for a total of \$91,000 per year. MRC Grant proposals are due June 6. State funds will need to be spent by June 30, 2020. The funds could be used to increase staff capacity, expansion of projects, or new projects. The consensus of the committee was to apply some of the additional funding to existing projects and the rest would go towards MRC Operations.

Miscellaneous Events and Announcements: All

- The Friends of Skagit Beaches will host a volunteer appreciation picnic on June 4th at Bowman Bay. Pete will bring a cake in celebration of the Northwest Straits Initiative's 20th Anniversary.
- Skagit MRC's 20th Anniversary Celebration will be held June 18th at 3:00pm in the County Commissioner's Hearing Room. Several folks will be invited to speak and the Commissioners will sign a proclamation. There will be cake in the lobby afterwards.
- The County, in partnership with State Parks and Padilla Bay, are working with an engineering firm to replace the failing tide gate at No Name Slough with a new structure designed to be more beneficial for fish passage and to accommodate sea level rise.

The meeting adjourned at 11:18am. The next MRC meeting will be held June 18, 2019 at the Skagit County Administration Building in Mount Vernon (1800 Continental Place).



SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the June 18, 2019, Skagit County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) meeting, held at the Skagit County Administration Building in Mount Vernon

- **MRC Members Attending:** Sarah Tchang, Jay Lind, Pete Haase, Tracy Alker, Paul Dinnel, Lynne Jordan, Jude Apple, Diane Hennebert, Betsy Stevenson, Phyllis Bravinder, Nicole Casper (Todd Mitchell's Alternate)
- **MRC Members Absent:** Jamey Selleck, Todd Mitchell, Todd Woodard
- **Others Attending:** Wayne Huseby, FOSB/FBARCSC; Brian Robson, Shell PSR; Dana Oster, NWSC; Jason Morgan, NWSF

Call to Order and Introduction: Sarah Tchang called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. and opened the meeting with introductions.

Approval of Minutes: May 9, 2019, MRC meeting minutes were approved as written

Public Comments: No comments

Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Report: *Phyllis Bravinder*

The last NWSC meeting was held over WebEx on May 31.

- 2019 MRC Conference will be held November 15-16 at the Courtyard by Marriott in Everett. The reception and dinner will be held at the Angel of the Winds Arena in Everett. Save the date cards were distributed to MRC members.
- June 28th NWSC meeting in Everett from 10:00am-3:00pm. Each MRC will be presenting one of their proposals for the new MRC Grant. Pete Haase will present Skagit MRC's Salish Sea Stewards proposal.

Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) Report: *Jay Lind*

- A joint meeting of the NWSC and the NWSF Executive Committees was held June 7 in Port Townsend. Jay and Jude both attended. Jude said he was impressed with how well the two groups communicated and worked through issues together. It was a very productive meeting. They discussed securing and streamlining funding for the predictable work of the MRCs. They also talked about the challenges in balancing the NWS Initiative regional scale programs with the locally driven priorities of the MRCs. Regional projects aren't always a good fit for every MRC.
- Tarrell Kullaway, NWSF Director of Philanthropy, recently resigned.
- Don is working with Lucas on the annual NWS Initiative Operations Plan.
- Skagit MRC's proposal to the NWSF's MRC Opportunity Fund-Boeing Stormwater Category has been approved for full funding.

Project Status & Discussion

- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** The event will be held August 24, 11am-3pm at the Fidalgo Bay Resort. Some of the supplies have been ordered. The Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve Citizen Stewardship Committee is considering the possibility of funding a portion of an AmeriCorps staff person's time to help support Fidalgo Bay Day next year.
- **Forage Fish Surveys:** Surveys continue at our restoration sites and index sites (Similk Bay, Guemes Channel, and Samish Island).
- **Kids on the Beach Project:** The program is now complete. The program details and recommendations will be compiled into a final report that will be used to help expand the program to other schools next year. Pete will be working with Mira and Padilla Bay staff to discuss the best options for collaborating on this project next year. Pete along with at least twelve other volunteers helped 19 kids from Island View Elementary School conduct a forage fish survey at Fidalgo Bay on June 13. A ton of eggs were found on the beach! Todd Woodard made a surprise visit and talked to the school group about the Samish Tribe and the importance of Fidalgo Bay. It was a wonderful treat for the kids! This was the school's third year participating in forage fish surveys at Fidalgo Bay.
- **Bowman Bay Restoration:** Monthly plant maintenance work parties with the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group started May 17 and will continue each month through September 20. The next one is scheduled for June 21. Monthly beach seining and forage fish surveys continue at Bowman Bay.

- Pinto Abalone Recovery: Field work is now complete for the season. The results will be compiled into a final report that will be finalized in September. There is still no evidence of successful natural spawning in the wild. Pinto abalone were recently listed as Endangered in Washington State. The state legislature set aside some funding to help support the pinto abalone recovery effort. A fundraising event for abalone was held on Bainbridge Island.
- Olympia Oyster Restoration: Sampling season is now in full swing again. Field activities have been reduced this year. Cultch bags were retrieved from 20 different locations around Fidalgo Bay to get an index of oyster settlement quantity and distribution. So far the results indicated a relatively low recruitment of oysters last year. Results also show that oysters are still not making it over to the west side of Fidalgo Bay. This is likely due to the north-south flow of water in Fidalgo Bay and not much mixing so the currents tend to keep the larvae being spawned on the east side of Fidalgo Bay. It is anticipated that the oyster shell and seed oysters distributed in Weaverling Spit on the western side of Fidalgo Bay last year will start spawning this summer. Paul helped Puget Sound Restoration Fund (PSRF) place oyster shell string samplers in Fidalgo Bay and Padilla Bay, and all over Puget Sound to get a good index of oyster larval settlement at the different locations. Paul also worked with PSRF and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) to distribute tile plates for oyster larvae settlement. The plates are collected at two week intervals. Paul will be working with Jude at Padilla Bay NERR to look for potential oyster restoration sites at the south end of Padilla Bay.
- Kayak Kelp Surveys: A kelp management workshop lead by the NWSC was held on June 13 in Olympia as part of the Puget Sound Kelp Conservation and Recovery Plan. Our lead kelp monitoring volunteers will be conducting a short paddle and protocol review at the Shannon Point kelp site on June 27. The plan is to meet at Sunset Beach in Washington Park, Anacortes at 9:00am. A kelp monitoring planning meeting will be held July 1 from 3 -4:30pm in the Padilla Bay upper conference room. Surveys will start up again in July. Congressman Rick Larsen is interested in going out on a kelp survey with some of our volunteers on June 30th. Details are still being worked out.
- Salish Sea Stewards: The Friends of Skagit Beaches hosted a volunteer appreciation picnic on June 4 at Bowman Bay. Pete brought a cake to the picnic in celebration of the NWS Initiative's 20th Anniversary. A Volunteer Needs Assessment Survey went out to all of the volunteers through Survey Monkey. We received 38 responses to the survey (about a 20% response rate). Preliminary results indicated that volunteers were not interested in helping with the administrative tasks of the Salish Sea Stewards program. The Salish Sea Stewards Planning Workshop was held June 13 at Padilla Bay from 9am to 4pm. Around 30 people attended. A lot of good ideas were discussed. Joan will compile the results of the survey and the workshop into a report for the MRC.

MRC Membership Update:

- Nate Biletnikoff recently resigned his seat on the MRC as the representative for Shell Puget Sound Refinery after accepting a new position in a different state.
- Lynne Jordan announced that she is also resigning her seat on the MRC as the representative for the Skagit Land Trust due to the travel requirements of her full-time job. Lynne is still interested in being involved as her schedule permits. Karri Odden, Lynne's alternate on the MRC, will temporarily take Lynne's place until she can find a new replacement to represent the Skagit Land Trust.
- MRC members expressed gratitude for the wealth of knowledge and valuable insights Nate and Lynne contributed to the MRC. We were very lucky to have them!

Miscellaneous Events and Announcements: All

- Pete has been invited to be interviewed by Shell Puget Sound Refinery on June 12. The purpose of the interview is to find out how Shell is doing in the local community.
- Skagit Land Trust Work Party at the Fidalgo Bay Carstens Stewardship Property on August 3th from 10am-1pm. Coastal Geologic Services recently completed a restoration study of the property for the Skagit Land Trust. The results of the study will be presented at a future MRC meeting.
- There is a new invasive species in Skagit County waterways, the New Zealand mud snail. The mud snails were recently discovered in Big Indian Slough near the tide gates. They tend to cling to vegetation in the water and can easily be transported and spread by humans and waterfowl. Rodger Fuller, the Watershed Stewardship Coordinator at Padilla Bay NERR, is developing monitoring plans and implementing decontamination procedures to help prevent further spread of this invasive species.

The meeting adjourned at 2:30pm. The MRC's 20th Anniversary Celebration was held at 3:00pm. The next MRC meeting will be held July 11, 2019 at the Skagit County Administration Building in Mount Vernon (1800 Continental Place).



SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the July 11, 2019, Skagit County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) meeting, held at the Skagit County Administration Building in Mount Vernon (1800 Continental Place)

Attendees:

- **MRC Members Attending:** Sarah Tchang, Jay Lind, Kari Odden (Lynne Jordan's Alternate), Paul Dinnel, Pete Haase, Phyllis Bravinder, Betsy Stevenson
- **MRC Members Absent:** Tracy Alker, Jude Apple, Diane Hennebert, Jamey Selleck, Todd Mitchell, Todd Woodard
- **Others Attending:** Kathy Thornburgh (MRC Applicant), Darcy Bird (Dept of Ecology), Charlette Turman (SCPW), Brian Robson (Shell Puget Sound Refinery), Cory Ertel (Shell Puget Sound Refinery), Bridget Trosin (WA Sea Grant)

Call to Order and Introduction: Sarah Tchang called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. and opened the meeting with introductions.

Approval of Minutes: June 18, 2019, MRC meeting minutes were approved as written.

Public Comments: Jay commented on an article he read in the Seattle Times about the different types of plastic in the ocean and how they impact the marine environment.

North Central Puget Sound Geographic Response Plan Update: *Darcy Bird, Ecology*

Darcy Bird is an oil spill preparedness planner with Washington State Department of Ecology. Darcy is in the process of updating Ecology's Geographic Response Plans (GRP) for the North Central Puget Sound and North Puget Sound regions. GRPs identify and prioritize the most sensitive resources at risk from oil spills for each geographic location and the best strategies to protect those resources in the event of an oil spill. GRPs are developed in collaboration with the local community, government agencies (local, state, and federal), as well as industry and tribal partners. If oil were to hit the water, an incident command post would be set up and manned by an environmental unit that would use the GRP as a guideline to employ the best strategies to protect wildlife and other sensitive resources. GRPs are also one of the many tools included in the Northwest Area Contingency Plan (NWACP), which is a tristate area (Oregon, Idaho and Washington) agreement that provides policies and tools to ensure a coordinated rapid response across jurisdictional boundaries in the event of a major oil spill. The marine environment is dynamic and constantly changing, so GRPs are considered a living document that needs to be updated on a regular basis. The formal update process occurs every five years. Several agencies and industry leaders and other stakeholder groups regularly conduct oil spill drills and field exercises to test the GRP strategies. As part of the process for updating the GRPs, Darcy will be meeting with different stakeholder groups, making field visits, looking for deficiencies in the current plan, and adding new strategies to protect our natural resources. She will be in our area July 30th through August 1st and will be back here again later in August and September as well.

Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Report: *Pete Haase*

- 2019 MRC Conference will be held November 15-16 at the Courtyard by Marriott in Everett. The reception and dinner will be held at the Angel of the Winds Arena in Everett. Contact Sasha Horst (horst@nwstraits.org) for ideas for conference topics or presenters.
- June 28th NWSC meeting in Everett from 10:00am-3:00pm.
 - Each MRC presented one of their proposals for the new 2019-2020 MRC Grant. Pete presented Skagit MRC's Salish Sea Stewards proposal to bring the rest of the MRCs up to speed on the Salish Sea Stewards program, the workshop and our goal to build a sustainable program, and what to expect in the future.
 - NOAA Hollings Scholar, Maddie Beaudry, informed the MRCs about her upcoming project to gather current and historical information on bull kelp to help illustrate kelp distribution in Puget Sound, identify factors contributing to bull kelp loss, and inform future kelp conservation and recovery planning.
 - The Final NWSC 2020-2024 Strategic Plan and 2020 Operations Plan were both adopted. MRCs are expected to be knowledgeable and supportive of these plans.
- Next Monthly NWSC Meeting: will be held over WebEX on July 26 (10am -12pm).

Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) Report: *Jay Lind*

- As of July 1, Don Hunger will serve as the new Director of the Foundation and Caroline Gibson will serve as the Director of Partnerships for the Foundation. They are looking for input from MRCs regarding funding needs for projects, etc. Pete suggested the MRC come up with a way to put our thoughts together to figure out what are needs and priorities are.
- Jay said the Foundation is working to emphasize the bottoms-up approach, by seeking more local input and direction from the MRCs regarding project priorities. They are looking into different ideas for raising money to help support the work of the MRCs.
- The Northwest Straits Foundation will be meeting with the governor at Cornet Bay on July 17 for a half an hour. Island County MRC will be involved.

Project Status & Discussion

- Fidalgo Bay Day: The event will be held August 24, 11am-3pm at the Fidalgo Bay Resort. Some of the supplies have been ordered. An inventory of the rest of the supplies will be conducted after the meeting. Jay is waiting on a confirmation from Rosie to see if she will once again be able to do the traditional welcoming ceremony on behalf of the Samish Indian Nation and offer the no-host salmon BBQ lunch.
- Bowman Bay Restoration: Monthly plant maintenance work parties with the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group started May 17 and will continue each month through September 20. The next one is scheduled for July 12. The trees and shrubs have struggled to survive at this site. Additional plantings of trees and shrubs will likely need to occur to replace the ones that died. It was originally anticipated that it would take at least five years of planting and plant maintenance to help establish a healthy riparian habitat at the Bowman Bay restoration site which. It will be five years in 2020, so we will have to wait and see if additional plantings and maintenance will still be required. Monthly beach seining and forage fish surveys continue. Intertidal monitoring, led by Jason Morgan, is scheduled to take place at Bowman Bay on July 17. Jason Toft with University of Washington will also be there conducting large woody debris and beach wrack surveys.
- Forage Fish Surveys: Monthly surveys continue at the Bowman Bay, NW March's Point, and Kukatali Preserve restoration sites, as well as the three index sites (Similk Bay, Guemes Channel at Ship Harbor, and Samish Island). Surprisingly, quite a bit of spawning was observed at the Ship Harbor site this past month. Charlette noted that the forage fish survey crews also make it a point to clean up any trash they find on the beach while they are out there doing the surveys. Two new Salish Sea Stewards volunteers have been helping with the surveys. At the request of the City of Anacortes Parks Department, the forage fish monitoring team agreed to survey the beach along the Guemes Channel trail once a month to look for forage fish spawning activity at five different sites that had good sediment and shading. They will write a report when the surveys are complete.
- Kids on the Beach Project: This year's program is now complete. The program details and recommendations will be compiled into a final report that will be used to help expand the program to other schools next year. It was pretty evident that the program had a positive impact on the students because they were able to take what they learned in the classroom and apply it to the field activities they were tasked with on the beach. Shell Puget Sound Refinery has offered to provide \$10,000 to support the program next year. Pete will be meeting with Mira and Padilla Bay staff soon to figure out the details with regards to how the program will be administered next year. Padilla Bay will likely take on more of a leadership role in running the program next year.
- Pinto Abalone Recovery: This year's field work is now complete. Paul Dinnel is working with Josh Bouma on the final report which will be complete before the end of this grant period. The Puget Sound Restoration Fund had a very successful fund raising event to help support the pinto abalone recovery effort.
- Olympia Oyster Restoration: Most of the field work for this year has been completed. Monitoring was reduced compared to previous years. The more intensive surveys will now only occur every 3-5 years. 20 recruitment bags were collected and monitored for oyster settlement and 20 new recruitment bags will be distributed in Fidalgo Bay. Preliminary data shows that minor settlement occurred last year compared to previous years. Post larval recruitment has yet to occur on the sampling ceramic tiles that are being collected every two weeks, but it's still early in the season. Paul will be working with Puget Sound Restoration Fund and volunteers to get measurements of the seed oysters placed at the Weaverling Spit site last fall along with some shell. He'll also be working with Jude Apple to check habitat suitability in the south channels of Padilla Bay for oyster seeding.
- Kayak Kelp Surveys: Seven new Salish Sea Steward volunteers expressed interest in helping with the kelp surveys this year. A short refresher paddle and protocol review occurred on June 27th at Washington Park with volunteers

Brad and Dale taking the lead. On July 1st there was a meeting to discuss the kelp monitoring program in Skagit County to plan out the summer surveys. A land-based GPS training was held on July 16 at Bayview State Park. The training also covered how to take photos and record data correctly on the forms. Congressman Rick Larsen joined volunteers for the first bull kelp monitoring trip of the season on June 30th. Lead volunteers have been assigned to each kelp survey site at Coffin Rocks, Shannon Point, and Biz Point. The lead volunteers are responsible for scheduling the surveys and coordinating with the new volunteers who have expressed interest in helping with the surveys. Kelp surveys will take place at Coffin Rocks on July 20th and at Shannon Point on July 28th.

- Salish Sea Stewards: Salish Sea Stewards have been putting in a lot of volunteer hours this summer! Joan Drinkwin is working on finalizing the report from the Salish Sea Stewards Planning Workshop which will be used to help determine the best option for administering the program in the future.

MRC Membership Update:

- Kathy Thornburgh applied to become an MRC member to replace Lynne Jordan as the new representative of the Skagit Land Trust. Unfortunately, there weren't enough members at the MRC meeting for a quorum, so the vote was postponed until the next MRC meeting in August.

Miscellaneous Events and Announcements: All

- Governor Jay Inslee will be making a visit to the Island County MRC's Cornet Bay restoration site on July 17 along with representatives from the Northwest Straits Commission and Northwest Straits Foundation, and several volunteers.

The meeting adjourned at 10:38am. The next MRC meeting will be held August 8, 2019 at Fidalgo Bay Resort (4701 Fidalgo Bay Rd, Anacortes).



SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the August 8, 2019, Skagit County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) meeting, held at Fidalgo Bay Resort in Anacortes

Attendees:

- **MRC Members Attending:** Tracy Alker, Jay Lind, Paul Dinnel, Pete Haase, Phyllis Bravinder, Betsy Stevenson, Nicole Casper (Todd Mitchell's Alternate), Jude Apple, Diane Hennebert, Rachel Best, Toby McLeod (Todd Woodard's Alternate)
- **MRC Members Absent:** Jamey Selleck, Sarah Tchang, Todd Woodard, Todd Mitchell
- **Others Attending:** Kathy Thornburgh (MRC Applicant), Brian Robson (MRC Applicant), Joan Drinkwin (NRC, SSS Coordinator), Darla Gay Smith (Rachel Best's Alternate)

Call to Order and Introduction: Betsy Stevenson called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m. and opened the meeting with introductions.

Approval of Minutes: July 11, 2019, MRC meeting minutes were approved as written.

Public Comments: No Comments

Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Report: *Pete Haase*

The July 26 NWSC meeting was a WebEx meeting.

- **NWSI Communications Plan:** An adhoc advisory team was established to review the NWSI Communications Plan and to work on filling the gaps. Pete is serving on the advisory team. The Communications Plan will be shared with the MRCs after it's finalized.
- **Washington State Kelp Conservation and Recovery Plan:** The Kelp Conservation and Recovery Plan should be ready for public comment in October. The NWSC has taken the lead role in the development of the plan and analyzing the kelp survey data being collected by all seven of the MRCs.
- **National Estuaries Week (September 14-21):** A toolkit is available for organizations planning special events.
- **2019 MRC Conference (November 15-16):** The conference will be held at the Courtyard by Marriott in Everett. The reception and dinner will be held at the Angel of the Winds Arena in Everett. The agenda is currently being developed. Let Sasha know if you have any topic suggestions. Check back here for more information: <http://nwstraits.org/2019-mrc-conference>.
- **Next Monthly NWSC Meeting:** will be held August 23 at the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribal Center in Clallam (10am - 3pm).

Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) Report: *Jay Lind*

- No NWSF meeting in July. The next one is scheduled for later this month.
- The NWS Foundation is soliciting sponsorships for the MRC Conference. If you know of a business/individual who might be interested in sponsoring, please contact Caroline at gibson@nwstraitsfoundation.org.
- Jay attended the event at the Cornet Bay restoration site on July 17 with Governor Jay Inslee and representatives from the NWSC, the NWSF, and the Island County MRC.

Project Status & Discussion

- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** The event will be held August 24, 11am-3pm at the Fidalgo Bay Resort. Jay thanked the team of people helping with the event. We could use a few more volunteers to help with the kids craft tables and face painting activities. Pete asked the Committee to help promote the event. We will be setting up the day before the event on Friday, August 23 from noon until 3pm.
- **Bowman Bay Restoration:** Monthly plant maintenance work parties with the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group started May 17 and will continue through September 20. The next one is scheduled for August 16. The trees and shrubs have struggled to survive at this site. Additional plantings of trees and shrubs will likely need to occur to replace the ones that died. Monthly beach seining and forage fish surveys continue. Intertidal monitoring, led by Jason Morgan, took place at Bowman Bay on July 17. Jason Toft with University of Washington was also there

conducting large woody debris and beach wrack surveys. There was a great turn-out of volunteers including lots of new Salish Sea Stewards volunteers. Volunteers also helped with the Friends of Skagit Beaches' intertidal interpretive station during the monitoring event. Intertidal monitoring also took place at the March's Point restoration site and at the Custom Plywood site.

- **Forage Fish Surveys:** Monthly surveys continue at the Bowman Bay, NW March's Point, and Kukatali Preserve restoration sites, as well as the three index sites (Similk Bay, Guemes Channel at Ship Harbor, and Samish Island). Volunteers had to maneuver around fallen trees at the Similk Bay site. There was a ton of spawning at the March's Point restoration site, but they were all dead due to the lack of shading. The group of volunteers looked for additional spawning near the giant boulders east of the restoration site on Marathon's property and found lots of eggs that appeared to be viable. Apparently the boulders provided enough shade. Pete suggested there might be some opportunities to apply additional beach sediment in that area to help improve spawning. Pete sent photos of the potential restoration site to Lisa Kaufman.
- **Kids on the Beach Project:** This year's program is now complete. The program details and recommendations will be compiled into a final report that will be used to help expand the program to other schools next year. Shell Puget Sound Refinery has offered to provide \$10,000 to support the program next year. Padilla Bay staff will be supporting the implementation of the Kids on the Beach project next year and they drafted a scope of work. The program will be expanded to include the beaches of Padilla Bay with a module that focuses on invasive species and how parasites work. Mira expressed interest in supporting the program next year in an advisory role.
- **Pinto Abalone Recovery:** Paul is working with Josh Bouma on the final report which will be complete before the end of this grant period.
- **Olympia Oyster Restoration:** Paul and other volunteers have been collecting WDFW's stacks of tiles at two week intervals throughout the summer to evaluate post larval recruitment. The last set of tile stacks that were collected indicated a fairly decent settlement this year. This data will be confirmed later next year after the recruitment bags are collected around Fidalgo Bay. Paul worked with Puget Sound Restoration Fund to get measurements of the seed oysters placed at the Weaverling Spit site last fall along with some shell. The results are being compiled into a report which will be shared with the MRC and the Samish Indian Nation.
- **Kayak Kelp Surveys:** Volunteers are monitoring three different kelp bed sites in Skagit County including Coffin Rocks, Shannon Point, and Biz Point. Phyllis said she was impressed by the dedication, enthusiasm and effort that it takes for the volunteers to do this type of field work. Kelp surveys took place at Coffin Rocks on July 20th, Shannon Point on July 28th, Biz Point on July 30, and Coffin Rocks again on August 15. The data that is collected is entered into an online toolbox that goes to Suzanne Shull at Padilla Bay.

Salish Sea Stewards Program Planning Report: Joan Drinkwin

To help build a stronger and more consistent program while keeping the financial burden on the MRC at a minimum, the Salish Sea Stewards Program Planning Committee carried out a process to help plan for the future of the program. With the MRC Opportunity Funds from the NWSF, Joan Drinkwin was contracted to evaluate the effectiveness of the program to current volunteers and to develop a new vision and structure for management and coordination of the Salish Sea Stewards Program. The process included three steps:

1. A needs assessment survey (40 responses out of 190).
2. An in-person workshop attended by 28 people including: MRC members, representatives from the NWSF and the NWSC, volunteers, and volunteer coordinators from similar programs. Joan also interviewed the leaders from other similar programs who were unable to attend the workshop.
3. Development of a restructuring plan that outlines recommended options for future program management.

Salish Sea Stewards Planning Report Summary: The draft report was shared with MRC members. The final report will be posted on the MRC website and the link will be shared with the volunteers, workshop participants, and anyone else who is interested. The report evaluated the tasks of the program coordinator position, the program training, the program planning committee, and program funding. The results and recommendations are as follows:

- **Volunteer Program Coordinator Position Recommendations:** This position has two main tasks. 1. Run the training program; and 2. Volunteer program support. This position does not currently involve attending special events or field time or planning and coordinating social gatherings. However, more face-time with the Volunteer Program Coordinator and social gatherings is something the volunteers have identified as a need for this program. There are several different options for filling the role of the Volunteer Program Coordinator including the following:
 - a) Partner with PBNERR to execute the training (if they are able to fill the Coastal Training Program position) and provide some volunteer program support (depending on staffing capacity). The benefit of administering

the program through PBNERR is the professional oversight and consistent staffing and it fits the mission of PBNERR.

- b) Develop an annual internship through the County to execute the training and support the program volunteers. An intern would likely cost less than PBNERR staff and have more face time with volunteers. However, this option would require more oversight by the MRC Coordinator, there would be an annual turnover, and there would also likely be inconsistencies in performance.
- c) Third option is some combination of the above options.

The Salish Sea Stewards Program Planning Committee will need to have conversations with PBNERR and the County before selecting the best option and making any final decisions.

- Program Training Recommendations: The training should remain much the same but should be shifted to begin earlier in the year to avoid conflicts with other spring training opportunities in the County.
- Program Planning Committee Recommendations: The Planning Committee structure should be modified to include more volunteers and partner organizations. The Committee's role/ job descriptions and terms should also be clarified.
- Program Funding Recommendations: The Skagit MRC should continue to provide the bulk of the program funding. The goal is to stay within or under the current \$20,000 budget from the MRC. Additional funding that the MRC Grant cannot cover should be sought through training fees, sponsorships, and an annual "giving" fundraising campaign through the Northwest Straits Foundation or in partnership with another non-profit like Friends of Skagit Beaches.

MRC Membership Applicants:

- Kathy Thornburgh applied to become an MRC member to replace Lynne Jordan as the new representative of the Skagit Land Trust. Per consensus, the MRC voted to make the recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to appoint Kathy to the MRC.
- Brian Robson applied to become an MRC member to replace Nate Biletnikoff as the new representative of Shell Puget Sound Refinery. Per consensus, the MRC voted to make the recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to appoint Brian to the MRC.

Miscellaneous Events and Announcements: All

- Pete shared that Mira Lutz with the SeaDoc Society recently held a free workshop for teachers and marine educators to provide the tools and resources they will need to teach Next Generation Science Standards-linked Salish Sea Curriculum. Mira introduced the SeaDoc Society's new book "Explore the Salish Sea: A Nature Guide for Kids". Their mission is to make the book available to every 5th and 6th grader in the Salish Sea area. Pete said the MRCs would also be a really great resource for the teachers and schools.
- Brian announced that Shell Puget Sound Refinery is partnering with the Skagit Conservation District and Ducks Unlimited to help improve the saltmarsh at the southeast corner of March's Point on Shell's property, near Whitmarsh Junction. Brian noted that it is not a mitigation or a restoration project. They would like to host a volunteer work party on Saturday, October 19th for Orca Recovery Day, to plant a buffer of native trees and shrubs between the pasture and the saltmarsh. A fence between the pasture and trees will be installed at a later date. They also plan to incorporate Large Woody Debris in the saltmarsh sometime next summer to provide cover for juvenile salmonids.

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 am. The next MRC meeting will be held September 12, 2019 at the Skagit County Administration Building in Mount Vernon (1800 Continental Place, Mount Vernon).



SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the September 12, 2019, Skagit County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) meeting, held at the Skagit County Administration Building in Mount Vernon

Attendees:

- **MRC Members Attending:** Tracy Alker, Jay Lind, Pete Haase, Betsy Stevenson, Jude Apple, Diane Hennebert, Brian Robson, Todd Mitchell, Kari Odden (Kathy Thornburghs Alternate)
- **MRC Members Absent:** Jamey Selleck, Sarah Tchang, Todd Woodard, Paul Dinnel, Phyllis Bravinder, Rachel Best,
- **Others Attending:** Darla Gay Smith (Rachel Best's Alternate); Jim Johannessen, CGS; Charlette Turman, SCPW; Michael Kirshenbam, SLT

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

Approval of Minutes: August 8, 2019, MRC meeting minutes were approved as written

Public Comments: No Comments

MRC Membership Update: *Betsy Stevenson*

Sarah Tchang (MRC Chair) announced her resignation with the MRC and wished everyone farewell. Sarah has accepted another position in Shoreline and her last day with the Port of Anacortes will be September 20th. Sarah has been an invaluable part of the MRC over the last four years and has provided great insight and leadership as Chair. Betsy will take on the roll as MRC Chair through the end of the year and Jay agreed to be Betsy's back-up as needed. MRC officer elections will be held at the January 9, 2020 MRC meeting.

Fidalgo Bay – Carstens Shoreline Study: *Jim Johannessen, Coastal Geologic Services*

Jim Johannessen with Coastal Geologic Services (CGS) recently completed a shoreline restoration assessment and recommendations for Skagit Land Trust's Carstens property on Fidalgo Bay in April 2019. The Carstens property was donated to Skagit Land Trust in 2016 for conservation. The house that was on the property has since been removed and volunteers have been working to remove some of the invasive vegetation. Skagit Land Trust applied for and was awarded Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program (ESRP) grant funding for the shoreline restoration assessment. The primary focus of the study was to quantify and map the marine debris material and identify what could be done to clean it up and restore the shoreline back to its natural environment. The marine debris consists of an assortment of concrete, asphalt, angular basalt, bricks, and other miscellaneous debris materials. A drone was used to take photos and map the site, but it was difficult to see the entire beach from the air because of the steep banks and excessive overhanging vegetation. The largest volume of marine debris is located along the northern shoreline of the Carstens preserve. There are smaller quantities of marine debris scattered along the southern shoreline of Skagit Land Trust's conservation easement. There are also some areas that are still fairly pristine. It is recommended that a long reach excavator and super sacks be used to remove the marine debris along the steep southern shoreline areas. The large pockets of marine debris in the northern areas are more easily accessible and can be removed with a conventional excavator. Because it is a low energy beach with little erosion, only a minimal amount of beach nourishment will likely be needed. The total estimated costs for removing approximately 2,000cy of marine debris with minimal beach nourishment and regrading would likely be around \$140,000 (with contingency after permitting). SLT has some funding left in their current ESRP grant for landowner outreach. Around \$8,000 was intended for baseline monitoring and data collection that must be spent by next June. Pete said there is already a ton of forage fish data for that site that can be shared with SLT. If SLT decides to move forward with shoreline restoration at this site, they hope the MRC will provide a letter of endorsement. SLT will talk to the Northwest Straits Foundation and the Samish Indian Nation to see if there is any interest in a partnership in moving this project forward.

Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Report: *Pete Haase*

The August 23, NWSC meeting was held at the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribal Center in Clallam County (10:15am-2:45pm).

- **External Communications and Project Site Visits:** Input from the MRCs is needed to help improve communications to the community, elected officials, and potential funders. The External Relations Committee would like to work with

MRCs to organize project site visits with elected officials and leaders. They are currently working with the Snohomish MRC to plan a boat tour of the Snohomish Estuary on September 25.

- Oil Spill Consequences in San Juan County Presentation: Marta Green, Puget Sound Recovery Coordinator for San Juan County, gave a presentation on the environmental and economic consequences of an oil spill in San Juan County.
- Clallam Intern Presentation and Panel Discussion: Clallam MRC Intern presented on her project surveying kelp forests in Clallam County, followed by a panel discussion on the benefits and challenges of the internship program.
- Puget Sound Kelp Conservation and Recovery Plan: Dana Oster presented the Puget Sound Kelp Conservation and Recovery Plan to the Department of Ecology. The Plan will be out for public comment soon.
- MRC Project Symposium -January 8, 2020 at Padilla Bay: The symposium is intended to bring together MRC members and staff from all 7 MRCs to share project ideas, lessons learned, MRC networking, and regional project development.
- 2019 MRC Conference (November 15-16): The conference will be held at the Courtyard by Marriott in Everett. MRC members are responsible for making their own arrangements for lodging, but they will be reimbursed. The reception and dinner will be held at the Angel of the Winds Arena in Everett.
- Next Monthly NWSC Meeting: will be a WebEx Conference call on September 27 (10am-12pm).

Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) Report: *Jay Lind*

- The last NWSF Board meeting was held in August at the Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association facility NW of Bellingham. They are seeking new board members.
- MRCs are being asked to provide a “wish list” of projects that are in need of funding to make it a little easier for the NWSF to help raise funds to get the work done.
- The NWSF is soliciting sponsorships for the MRC Conference. If you know of a business/individual who might be interested in sponsoring, please contact Caroline at gibson@nwstraitsfoundation.org.
- The MRC Opportunity Fund for 2020 will likely be restructured.
- The Foundation is currently looking into the possibility of moving their office space to Padilla Bay so they could be co-located with the NWSC and improve communication and cohesiveness.
- The September NWSF meeting will be a conference call. The next in-person NWSF meeting is scheduled for October in Port Townsend.

Project Status & Discussion

- Salish Sea Stewards: A Salish Sea Stewards gathering will be held at Padilla Bay NERR on October 8th at noon. The theme is data feedback! Jason Morgan will be presenting on the nearshore monitoring data and Dana Oster will be reporting on the kelp monitoring data. The agenda will also include an update on the Salish Sea Stewards program and plans for 2020, and recognition of volunteers who have donated more than 100 hours in the last 12 months.
- Fidalgo Bay Day: The event was held August 24, 11am-3pm at the Fidalgo Bay Resort. Jay thanked the team of people who helped make the event a huge success. An estimated 300-400 people attended this year! There were a few new organizations with educational booths and activities including the City of Anacortes in partnership with the Port of Anacortes, the Swinomish Department of Environmental Protection, and Diver Laura’s virtual reality experience. The Anacortes Key Club students did a wonderful job helping with the kids crafts table and face painting this year. Over 200 people participated in the Passport Activity. Diver Laura’s virtual reality experience was also extremely popular. The beach seining activity captured lots of fish. Pete proposed that we go ahead and set the date for next year’s event for Saturday, August 29, 2020. Jay said he will try to reserve the Fidalgo Bay Resort for that date. Jay suggested forming a committee to help plan and coordinate next year’s event. The first Fidalgo Bay Day Committee meeting will be held October 10, right after the MRC meeting at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort. MRC members are welcome to attend.
- Bowman Bay Restoration: The last monthly plant maintenance work party with the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group will take place September 20. A walk-through will be scheduled with SFEG to determine if any additional planting will be needed and come up with a maintenance plan for 2020.
- Forage Fish Surveys: Monthly surveys continue at the Bowman Bay, NW March’s Point, and Kukatali Preserve restoration sites, as well as the three index sites (Similk Bay, Guemes Channel at Ship Harbor, and Samish Island). Charlette’s internship with the County ends in December, so she will no longer be the lead for the index site surveys. A new County intern or a volunteer will need to be trained to take over that role.
- Kids on the Beach Project: This year’s program is now complete. The program details and recommendations will be compiled into a final report that will be finalized the end of this month. The MRC will be partnering with Padilla Bay NERR to administer and expand the program under the new MRC grant. Some teachers have already signed up to participate. Some of the classroom and field exercises will likely take place this fall.

- Pinto Abalone Recovery: Paul is working with Josh Bouma on the final report which will be complete the end of this month.
- Olympia Oyster Restoration: No update.
- Kayak Kelp Surveys: Volunteers are monitoring three different kelp bed sites in Skagit County including Coffin Rocks, Shannon Point, and Biz Point. Surveys will be finished up for the season later this month. An update will be provided at the October 8th Salish Sea Stewards gathering.

MRC Administrative Report: *Tracy Alker*

- The current MRC Grant expires **September 30, 2019**. MRC members were asked to report their volunteer hours and submit invoices for reimbursement. Project Leads were asked to submit their quarterly progress reports and all final reports by September 30th.
- The new MRC Grant starts October 1, 2019 – September 30, 2020. Funding for the “Kids on the Beach” and “Salish Sea Stewards” projects will be routed directly to Padilla Bay instead of through the County since they will be administering both programs. Skagit MRC project leads and subcommittees will still be very much involved in overseeing these projects.

Miscellaneous Events and Announcements: *All*

- 2019 Underwater Sound Sources Webinar Series (Sept 18 and Oct 10): includes two 60-minute webinars that will focus on commercial shipping, sonar, and echo-sounders as underwater sound sources. To register: <https://dosits.org/decision-makers/webinar-series/webinars-2019/>: Commercial Vessel Traffic (Michelle Sanders).
- MyCoast App Overview and Lessons Learned Webinar (September 24th, 10:00am-11:00am): Link to join the webinar: <https://zoom.us/j/869492087>. Call-in info: (669) 900-6833, Webinar ID: 869 492 087.
- MRC and Citizen Science Presentation by Pete Haase (October 1, 7pm-9pm) at the Burlington Library. MRC members are encouraged to attend to help set up and provide support. Setup will start at 6:00pm.
- Friends of Skagit Beaches Fidalgo Bay Shoreline Academy (October 19, 9:30am-3:15pm) at the NW Educational Services District Bld in Anacortes. Registration deadline is October 19: www.skagitbeaches.org.

The meeting adjourned at 10:40 am. The next MRC meeting will be held October 10, 2019 at the Fidalgo Bay Resort in Anacortes.



SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the October 10, 2019, Skagit County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) meeting, held at the Fidalgo Bay Resort in Anacortes

Attendees:

- **MRC Members Attending:** Tracy Alker, Jay Lind, Pete Haase, Betsy Stevenson, Diane Hennebert, Brian Robson, Kathy Thornburgh, Phyllis Bravinder, Rachel Best, Suzanne Shull (Jude Apple's Alternate), Matt Castle (Todd Woodard's Alternate)
- **MRC Members Absent:** Todd Woodard, Paul Dinnel, Jude Apple, Todd Mitchell
- **Others Attending:** Lisa Kaufman, NWSF

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

Approval of Minutes: September 12, 2019, MRC meeting minutes were approved as written

Public Comments: No Comments

MRC Membership Update: *Betsy Stevenson*

Jamey Selleck announced his resignation with the MRC. Jamey said he greatly enjoyed his time with the MRC and the NWSF. Unfortunately, due to his increasingly busy work schedule, Jamey is no longer able to actively participate on the MRC. The committee expressed much appreciation of Jamey's scientific knowledge and insight and for his strong leadership as the former NWSF Representative and former MRC-Chair.

Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Report: *Phyllis Bravinder*

The September 27, NWSC meeting was a WebEx Conference Call (10am- 12).

- **NWSC Communications Committee:** They are currently working on messaging in support of the NWSF Strategic Plan objectives. Island County is working on their own communication plan.
- **Snohomish Estuary Tour:** Snohomish MRC along with the NWSC and the NWS Foundation, hosted a boat tour to showcase their restoration projects as part of their 20th anniversary celebration.
- **2019 MRC Conference (November 15-16):** The conference will be held at the Courtyard by Marriott in Everett. MRC members are responsible for making their own arrangements for lodging, but can get reimbursed. The reception and dinner will be held at the Edward H. Hansen Conference Center, adjacent to Angel of the Winds Arena in Everett. The Keynote Speaker is Dr. Kirk Johnson, Sant Director, Smithsonian Museum of Natural History. Check the Commission website for conference updates: <https://nwstraits.org/2019-mrc-conference>.
- **MRC Project Symposium -January 8, 2020 at Padilla Bay:** MRC members and staff from all 7 MRCs will have the opportunity to share project ideas, lessons learned, MRC networking, and regional project development.
- **2020-2021 EPA Workplan:** Lucas is looking into how the NWSF work aligns with federal agencies including NOAA and EPA. MRCs are also encouraged to also consider how our work aligns with existing federal and state programs.
- **Next Monthly NWSC Meeting:** WebEx Conference call on December 6 (10am-12pm).

Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) Report: *Jay Lind*

- September's board meeting was canceled. The next board meeting will be held later this month.
- The Foundation's Administrative Assistant position is currently vacant.
- The Foundation is still looking for MRC Conference sponsorships.
- The Opportunity Fund will be a little different in 2020.
- Caroline is the primary contact for MRCs.

Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) Projects Update: *Lisa Kaufman*

- **March Point Beach Restoration Project (Andeavor/Marathon Refinery Grant):** The NWSF received grant funding for project feasibility and design, but the project had to be put on the backburner for a while. The grant expires the end of December but there might be some flexibility to extend it. Jim Johannessen (Coastal Geologic Services) will start working on the feasibility and design sometime next month. The feasibility study will look at removing some of the

rock that has fallen onto the beach from the revetment, pushing the remaining rock back up to protect the road, and bringing in beach nourishment material. The project site has plenty of shade for forage fish, but most of the beach material has been buried under rock.

- Orca Recovery Day Events: The Northwest Straits Foundation partnered with the Snohomish County MRC and Snohomish County Conservation to host an Orca Recovery Day forum on October 16. Marine scientists Jacques White and Rich Osborne will be presenting on the Southern Resident Killer Whale (SRKW) recovery efforts and problems facing our SRKWs. The Foundation is also partnering with the Whidbey Island Conservation District and Island County MRC, to host native vegetation planting and weeding parties at the restored sites at Sunlight Shores and Cornet Bay on October 19.
- Similk Bay Restoration Project: The project consists of removing riprap from two adjacent properties along 200 feet of shoreline. This project is now fully funded! NWSF was awarded Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program (ESRP) small grants funding, US Fish and Wildlife Service funding, and the two property owners are providing an additional \$10,000 each as a match. Lisa recently applied for permits and is working closely with the Swinomish Tribe. An archeological monitor will be on site during the construction process.
- Shore Friendly Program: The Shore Friendly Program is now being funded through the Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program (ESRP). NWSF plans to continue focusing their efforts on preventing new armoring in areas where it isn't necessary and educating property owners on how to better manage their shorelines. Lisa wants to particularly focus on previous site visits to determine the feasibility for armor removal and the specific issues of each property, as well as the solutions, incentives, and resources the property owners would need to better manage their shorelines. The NWSF plans to seek additional funding to train land managers on coastal processes in each county. The workshops are estimated to cost around \$9,000 - \$11,000. Betsy said there might be some funding available from the County's Shoreline Master Plan update that could be used to support this type of training in Skagit County. The Swinomish Tribe approached the NWSF for help in developing and implementing their own Shore Friendly Program which will likely include educational beach walks and site visits.
- Nearshore Restoration Monitoring- Funding for nearshore monitoring at Bowman Bay is now being rolled into the Near Term Action (NTA) funding that the NWSF recently received to support restoration monitoring at a regional scale. They are partnering with the University of Washington to look at the effects of before and after shoreline armor removal. The goal for Bowman Bay is to monitor for five years, skip a year, and then monitor year seven and year 10. NTA funding will be available through 2021. Skagit Restoration Initiative funding pays for the monitoring at March's Point.
- Large Restoration Projects- The NWSF is interested in getting more involved in larger and more visible projects such as the Fidalgo Bay trestle. Please contact Lisa with ideas.

Project Status & Discussion

- Salish Sea Stewards: A Salish Sea Stewards brown bag lunch gathering was held at Padilla Bay NERR on October 8th. The theme was data feedback. Jason Morgan gave a presentation on the nearshore monitoring data and Dana Oster gave a presentation on the kelp monitoring data. Rachel Best facilitated the event and provided an update on the Salish Sea Stewards program and plans for 2020. The 21 volunteers who donated more than 100 hours in the last 12 months were given special recognition and were each presented with a lapel pin for their accomplishments. The following MRC members were also awarded pins for 100 volunteer hours: Rachel Best, Pete Haase, and Paul Dinnel. The next gathering is tentatively scheduled for January 21 at the Fidalgo Bay Resort. It is anticipated that Tim Manns will give a talk on birds followed by a bird walk along the Tommy Thompson Trail. The Salish Sea Stewards training program will be administered through Padilla Bay in 2020. The Salish Sea Stewards Planning Committee will likely be meeting with Padilla Bay in early December.
- Fidalgo Bay Day: The 2019 Fidalgo Bay Day report is now complete and has been posted on the [MRC website](#). The date for next year's event has been set for Saturday, August 29, 2020. The Fidalgo Bay Resort has been reserved. A subcommittee has been formed to help plan and implement the 2020 event. Subcommittee members include Jay Lind, Pete Haase, Rachel Best, Dianne Hennebert, and Tracy Alker. Jay will also continue to be the MRC Project Lead for Fidalgo Bay Day. The subcommittee will be meeting today, following the MRC meeting. Other MRC members are welcome to attend.
- Bowman Bay Restoration: The 2019 summary report is now complete. The last monthly plant maintenance work party with the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group (SFEG) took place September 20. Pete spoke to a park visitor who expressed appreciation of the restoration work that we've done out there. Tracy and Lisa completed a walk-through of the site with SFEG to come up with a plant maintenance plan for 2020. The dune grass and ground cover are doing great. However, most of the conifers did not survive except for the ones that planted themselves. It was determined

that any new planting would need to occur right along the fence line where there seems to be a greater chance of survival. Soil samples were taken and sent to the lab to see if the soil needs to be amended or if we just need to water more often. There are a few extra plants at Cornet Bay that could potentially be transplanted to the Bowman Bay restoration site. Planting most likely wouldn't happen until sometime in March or April 2020.

- Forage Fish Surveys: Monthly surveys continue at the Bowman Bay, NW March's Point, and Kukatali Preserve restoration sites, as well as the three index sites (Similk Bay, Guemes Channel at Ship Harbor, and Samish Island). Charlotte's internship with the County ends in December which means she will no longer be the lead for the index site surveys. It is anticipated that the new County intern or a volunteer would be trained to take over that role. At the request of the City of Anacortes Parks Department, volunteers surveyed five spots along the Guemes Channel Trail during the summer months to look for surf smelt. The volunteers compiled the data into a report that was submitted to the City. Dana Oster coordinated a conference call with all of the MRCs conducting forage fish surveys and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) earlier this month. WDFW created an electronic forage fish survey form that volunteers will eventually be able to use to enter their data while in the field using a weather proof tablet. The tablet would automatically record the GPS coordinates and could also be used to take the photos. The number of tablets that might be available for volunteers to use will depend on funding.
- Kids on the Beach: The final report of the 2019 Kids on the Beach program is now complete and has been posted on the [MRC website](#). Skagit MRC is partnering with Padilla Bay NERR to administer and expand the program under the new MRC grant and with funding from Shell Puget Sound Refinery. Conway School is the only school participating in the program this fall which will consist of three classroom days, one field day, and a science symposium to present their work. The field day will take place Wednesday, October 16, at the Fidalgo Bay Resort with fifty 8th grade students and 25 volunteers. They will conduct forage fish surveys, beach seining, and microscope work. The students will be presenting their work at a science symposium at Padilla Bay on November 22. In the spring of 2020, students from Sedro Woolley, Concrete, and Mount Vernon will be participating in science activities on the beach at Padilla Bay. The spring program will focus on collecting data on the Batillaria snail. It is anticipated that we will have a total of around 215 students participating in the 2019 fall and 2020 spring programs! In addition to our regular Kids on the Beach program, Pete Haase and several other volunteers assisted 66 5th graders from John Stanford International School in Seattle with forage fish surveys at Camp Kirby on October 3rd. The kids rotated in smaller groups to different learning stations including forage fish, water quality and owl pellets.
- Pinto Abalone Recovery: The 2019 final report is now complete and has been posted on the [MRC website](#). Tracy is working on a new contract with Puget Sound Restoration Fund.
- Olympia Oyster Restoration: No update.
- Kayak Kelp Surveys: The Kelp Conservation and Recovery Plan comment period begins October 15. The 2019 surveys are now complete. Volunteers monitor three different bull kelp bed sites in Skagit County including Coffin Rocks, Shannon Point, and Biz Point during the growing season in July, August, and September. Each site has been assigned a lead volunteer. The lead volunteers set their own survey schedules according to the tides and send out requests to other volunteers for help as needed. Volunteers can now post their survey data online. Suzanne Shull creates maps with the data to help measure the changes in the kelp beds over time. Dana Oster presented the preliminary survey data at the October 8th Salish Sea Stewards gathering. Preliminary results indicate that the bull kelp beds in Skagit County are increasing in size, but the kelp beds in Snohomish County and south Puget Sound seem to be decreasing. Protocols for conducting linear surveys of kelp beds with motorized boats is now available if MRCs are interested. The benefit of surveying with motorized boats is that it would allow MRCs to survey all kelp beds along the shorelines that aren't easily accessible by kayak. Satellite imagery, drones, and aerial photos, are also great tools that could be used in a combination with other survey methods. Samish Indian Nation is also monitoring kelp beds around the San Juan Islands and Skagit County with motorized boats, but found kayak surveys to be more accurate. They are still able to get to the sites fairly quickly with a motorized boat and take the kayak with them to do the actual surveys. The sites in Skagit County that they are currently monitoring include Burrows Light House and Reef Point, Cypress Island. Preliminary data indicates that the kelp bed at Reef Point has actually decreased significantly.

MRC Administrative Report: *Tracy Alker*

- 2019-2021 MRC Grant: The new MRC Grant just got signed by the County and has been sent to Ecology for signature. It is a two year grant with a start date of October 1, 2019 – September 30, 2021. Funding for the "Kids on the Beach"

and “Salish Sea Stewards” projects is being routed directly to Padilla Bay instead of through the County since Padilla Bay will be administering both programs.

- November 14th MRC Meeting: The Committee voted to cancel the November 14th MRC meeting due to the MRC Conference scheduled that same week (November 15th and 16th).
- MRC Conference: Nov 15-16 in Everett: Due to venue space, MRC displays cannot be accommodated. The following alternatives are being considered: Podcast interviews of at least one member from each MRC; MRC project-sharing postcards; MRC project slide show.
- Engaging Elected Officials: MRCs are encouraged to look for opportunities to keep our elected officials engaged and informed about our work. Send ideas for project site tours to Lucas and let him know about communications with elected officials and letters of support.
- MRC Leadership Term Limits: The Committee discussed the possibility of term limits for leadership positions to help reduce member burnout and encourage others to step in to leadership roles. No decisions were made.
- MRC Communications: MRCs are encouraged to consider ways to build communication support on their MRCs. One suggestion was to encourage people with that skillset to apply when a vacancy comes up.
- Pete’s MRC Presentation: Tracy thanked Pete for giving the presentation on behalf of the MRC at the Burlington Library on October 1. It was part of an environmental lecture series sponsored by an organization called Indivisible Skagit. Pete’s presentation provided a brief overview of the MRC but primarily focused on citizen science and volunteer opportunities in our community.
- MRC Project Planning Retreat: The Committee discussed the possibility of scheduling a project planning retreat sometime after the January 8th MRC Symposium. The MRC also discussed the idea of forming a project planning subcommittee, but no decisions were made.

Northwest Straits Foundation’s Boeing Stormwater Grant Update: Diane Hennebert

Diane sent a list of 10 potential sites in Anacortes for raingardens to the engineering firm that will be doing the conceptual designs and narratives. They visited the sites last week. The engineer thought that several of the sites could be really strong candidates for grant funding. A pre-draft conceptual design of the raingarden signage has been completed and is looking really good so far. Diane will have more information to share at the next MRC meeting.

Miscellaneous Events and Announcements: All

- **October 12- Free Workshop**: Creosote Removal – How YOU Can Help Keep Our Beaches Clean! Camano Island (9am-11am) and Whidbey Island (2pm-4pm). Register here: www.surveymonkey.com/r/5SRKV5VK.
- **Southern Resident Killer Whales. Will the Next Generation Survive? October 16 (6:30pm)**: The forum will be held at the Mukilteo Rosehill Community Center, Point Elliot Room 304 Lincoln Ave, Mukilteo.
- **Friends of Skagit Beaches Fidalgo Bay Shoreline Academy- October 19** (9:30am-3:15pm) at the NW Educational Services District Building in Anacortes. Registration deadline is October 19: www.skagitbeaches.org.
- **Orca Recovery Day- October 19, 10am-1pm**: The Skagit Conservation District is partnering with Shell Puget Sound refinery, Ducks Unlimited, and Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group for a restoration planting project that will restore a three-acre buffer of land on a small pocket estuary on March Point. They are seeking volunteers to assist with planting 1300 native trees and shrubs. RSVP Bill Blake at bill@skagitcd.org.
- **MRC Project Symposium – January 8, 2020** at Padilla Bay, 9M – 4:30pm. The goal of this symposium is to bring together MRC members and staff from all 7 MRCs and the NWSI to share near and long-term project ideas, share nuts and bolts of how specific projects were started and funded, how they are funded, challenges they found, lessons learned, develop cross MRC collaboration, MRC networking, and regional project development. All MRC members are encouraged to attend.

The meeting adjourned at 11:10 am. The next MRC meeting will be held December 12, 2019 at the Fidalgo Bay Resort in Anacortes.



SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the December 12, 2019, Skagit County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) meeting, held at the Fidalgo Bay Resort in Anacortes

Attendees:

- **MRC Members Attending:** Tracy Alker, Jay Lind, Pete Haase, Betsy Stevenson, Diane Hennebert, Phyllis Bravinder, Rachel Best, Jude Apple, Matt Castle (Samish Indian Nation Rep and MRC Member Applicant), Paul Dinnel, Kari Odden (Kathy's Alternate)
- **MRC Members Absent:** Todd Woodard, Todd Mitchell, Kathy Thornburgh, Brian Robson
- **Others Attending:** Darla Gay Smith (Rachel's MRC Alternate), Kelsey Taylor (SFEG), Kevin Anderson (Port of Anacortes)

Call to Order and Introduction: Betsy Stevenson called the meeting to order at 9:08 a.m. and opened the meeting with introductions.

Approval of Minutes: October 10, 2019, MRC meeting minutes were approved as written. There was no MRC meeting in November due to the MRC Conference.

Public Comments: Jay Lind shared an article from the Kitsap Sun about the low salmon runs this year. Luckily it's not all bad news because Pete said there has been an enormous run of Kokanee salmon in Lake Samish streams!

MRC Membership Update: *Betsy Stevenson*

Todd Woodward is stepping down from the MRC because of his busy schedule and other work obligations. He requested Matt Castle take his place on the MRC as the representative of the Samish Indian Nation. The Committee voted by consensus to make the recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to appoint Matt to the MRC.

Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Report: *Pete Haase*

The December 6, NWSC meeting was a WebEx Conference Call (10am- 12).

- **NWSC Staff Update:** Nicole Jordan's last day at the NWSC was yesterday and Dana Oster will also be taking some personal leave for an extended period, so the NWSC will be short-staffed for a while.
- **Kelp Recovery WebEx and Plan Update:** The December 11th Kelp WebEx was canceled. Lucas will be working with the Kelp Conservation and Recovery Plan team to determine the next steps. The Plan will be open for public comment and shared with the MRC as soon as it is available.
- **MRC Project Symposium:** The MRC Project Symposium, originally scheduled for January 8th at Padilla Bay, has been postponed until further notice.
- **Next MRC Conference:** November 6-7, 2020. Location TBD.
- **NWSC/NWSF Retreat:** March 26-27, 2020 at Padilla Bay.
- **Puget Sound Partnership's (PSP) State of the Sound Report:** The report is now available online: <https://www.psp.wa.gov/sos.php>. According to the report, three indicators have shown declines (i.e. herring, orcas, and the marine water condition index). Only four of the 31 measurable indicators are currently meeting their goals and only 10 of those indicators are showing some improvement.
- **Tribal update:** Cecilia Gobin talked about the work the tribes are doing to help the orcas and salmon recover.
- **Presentation on harbor seal predation on salmon.** Researchers at Western Washington University presented their recent study on harbor seal predation on salmon. According to their study, male harbor seals eat a higher percentage of larger salmon compared to female harbor seals. Females tend to eat smaller salmon found closer to shore near their haul-out areas.
- **NWSC/MRC Funding:** Lucas has been doing a tremendous job presenting the work of the MRCs to the Puget Sound Partnership and legislators to continue seeking support and funding for our programs. He has also been looking into other potential funding models at the federal and state level that could help sustain the NWSC and MRCs in a more direct and/or permanent way.
- **Next Monthly NWSC Meeting:** January 31 at Camano Island (10am – 3pm).

Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) Report: *Jay Lind*

- NWSF Staff Update: Foundation recently hired new Admin Staff as well as a new Nearshore Restoration Program Assistant. The Philanthropist position still remains vacant.
- Fundraising Update: The Foundation is hosting a fundraiser event in Bellingham tonight at the Firefly Lounge (1015 State Street) from 6pm-9pm with live music by Whiskey River Mudflats. There will be a \$10 cover charge that will include one drink and the rest will go towards supporting the NWSF.
- Next NWSF Board Meeting: Tuesday, December 17.

Northwest Straits Initiative Funding Clarification Discussion: All

The Committee discussed the differences between the funding the MRCs receive from the Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) and the funding raised by the Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) which are both completely separate entities under the Northwest Straits Initiative.

- Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC): The NWSC provides base funding for the everyday operations and action projects of the MRCs and oversees regional projects. Our base funding from the NWSC currently comes from the United States Environmental Protection Agency through the Puget Sound Partnership. The WA Department of Ecology is the Fiscal Agency for the MRC grant. The NWSC Staff are employed by the WA Department of Ecology and cannot accept private donations.
- Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF): The NWSF serves as the non-profit extension of the Northwest Straits Initiative to pursue additional funding from public and private sources to help leverage support for MRC projects and supplement the core federal support for MRCs. The NWSF also manages the MRC Opportunity Funds, the Boeing Stormwater Grant, the Skagit Restoration Initiative Funds, the regional derelict fishing gear removal program, large nearshore restoration and monitoring projects and shoreline landowner workshops in partnership with the MRCs.

Project Status & Discussion

- Salish Sea Stewards: The Salish Sea Stewards training program will be administered through Padilla Bay this year. The Salish Sea Stewards Planning Committee met with Jude and the Padilla Bay education staff on December 4th. Classes will be held every Tuesday starting March 10th through May 12 from 1pm – 5pm at Padilla Bay. The promotional flyer and application will be updated and posted on the MRC website and widely distributed. Friends of Skagit Beaches plan to continue to support the Salish Sea Stewards program.
- Fidalgo Bay Day: The date for next year's event has been set for Saturday, August 29, 2020 at the Fidalgo Bay Resort. Jay is waiting to hear back from the Shannon Point Marine Center regarding the availability of the touch tank. Jude volunteered to reach out to Coral Gehrke, the Education Programs Specialist at the Shannon Point Marine Center, as well. Tracy will try to contact Diver Laura about hosting the very popular virtual reality diving experience again. Jude said Laura is currently working on a new video that is specific to the Salish Sea and will highlight the eelgrass beds in Padilla Bay. Paul offered to make arrangements to get shellfish from Taylors, but someone else will need to prepare the shellfish at the event this year. Pete said we need help coming up with new ideas for kids activities this year. Jude said he will try to get in touch with the Anacortes Green Club to see if they might be able to help with some of the kids activities. The Mount Vernon Key Club hosted the kids activities last year. Pete suggested the Children's Museum of Skagit County would also be a great organization to partner with, but someone needs to make the contact. Save the Date Cards have been printed and will be distributed at upcoming events such as the Evergreen STEM Night in Sedro Woolley on January 23 and Storming the Sound on January 30 in La Conner. The Fidalgo Bay Planning Subcommittee will likely meet sometime in January to come up with a list of task assignments and lead volunteers.
- Bowman Bay Restoration: The dune grass and ground cover are doing great. However, most of the conifers and shrubs did not survive except for the ones that planted themselves. Jason Morgan took soil samples to see if the soil might need to be amended. Watering more frequently during the hot dry summer months will also likely help increase survival rates. A few extra spruce trees at Cornet Bay were recently transplanted to the Bowman Bay restoration site this year.
- Forage Fish Surveys: Monthly surveys continue at the Bowman Bay, NW March's Point, and Kukatali Preserve restoration sites, as well as the three index sites (Similk Bay, Guemes Channel at Ship Harbor, and Samish Island). Charlette's internship with the County just ended on Monday which means she will no longer be the lead for the index site surveys. It is anticipated that the new County intern or a volunteer would be trained to take over that role. Pete Haase and Jack Middleton will be giving a talk on forage fish and demonstration at the Skagit Eagle Festival in a couple of weeks. The forage fish survey crew also received a request to assist with a forage fish training session as part of Amy Eberling's boat-based Guardians of the Sea program for high school students. Forage fish data would be collected on the beaches at Skyline in Anacortes and would go to the WA Department of Fish and Wildlife. Pete asked

if the MRC had any objections to the forage fish volunteers helping with this activity as representatives of the MRC. The Committee voted by consensus to support this education/outreach opportunity with the caveat that Amy is able to get permission from the property owners to access the beach.

- **Kids on the Beach:** Skagit MRC is partnering with Padilla Bay NERR to administer and expand the program under the new MRC grant and with funding from Shell Puget Sound Refinery. Annie England, Education Specialist with Padilla Bay NERR, is now in charge of running the Kids on the Beach program. Shell expressed interest in incorporating water quality into the curriculum. Conway School is the only school that participated in the program this fall which consisted of three classroom days, one field day, and a science symposium to present their work. The field day took place October 16, at the Fidalgo Bay Resort with 50 8th- grade students and 25 volunteers. They conducted forage fish surveys, beach seining, and microscopy. The students presented their work at a science symposium at Padilla Bay on November 22 with some of the parents and volunteers in the audience. Annie hand-crafted beautiful Thank You cards that were signed by the students and given to all of the volunteers who helped on the beach. In the spring of 2020, students from Sedro Woolley, Concrete, and Mount Vernon will be participating in science activities on the beach at Padilla Bay. The spring program will focus on invasive species and collecting data on the invasive Batillaria snail with Robert Fueller.
- **Pinto Abalone Recovery:** Tracy is working on the new contract with Puget Sound Restoration Fund. Field work will start up again in January or February through April after the kelp dies back for increased visibility.
- **Olympia Oyster Restoration:** No update. Field work will likely start up again in the summer of 2020.
- **Kayak Kelp Surveys:** No update. Phyllis said that a lot of great information about kelp was shared at this year's MRC Conference in Everett. Check out [SoundIQ](#) to see some of the data that has been collected. Surveys will likely start again in June or July.

SeaDoc Society Grant Discussion: All

SeaDoc Society is applying for an EPA Environmental Education Grant for \$100,000 with a \$69,000 match. Under this grant proposal, the SeaDoc Society will provide copies of their book ***Explore the Salish Sea, A Nature Guide for Kids*** and curriculum to 5th grade classrooms, and free educator workshops to train teachers in the curriculum and build relationships with marine experts such as the MRCs. They will also be providing a free online club for kids to build their ocean IQ at www.juniorseadoctors.org. The grant stipulates that 25% of the total EPA funds, \$25,000, be distributed to 5 sub-awardees (\$5,000 each) to help facilitate SeaDoc Society's environmental education project proposal. \$2,500 of which will fund an Environmental Education Program Coordinator and \$2,500 will fund schools directly which may include busing costs, project materials, etc.

Mira Lutz, SeaDoc Society's Education Coordinator, invited the MRCs to apply for funding as sub-awardees. The first 5 MRCs who express interest and complete the Commitment Form by 9:00AM tomorrow will be included in SeaDoc's grant application. As sub-awardees, the MRCs would be responsible for rallying 5th grade teachers to connect them with SeaDoc Society's book ***Explore the Salish Sea, A Nature Guide for Kids*** and curriculum. The MRCs would also provide support for real, experiential Salish Sea stewardship focused programs that would occur between Aug 1, 2020-July 31, 2021.

Stacy Dahl, Skagit Land Trust's Volunteer and Education Programs Coordinator, expressed interest in providing support for an outdoor classroom program if someone from the MRC would be willing to take the lead. Skagit Land Trust's shoreline conservation properties could be used for outdoor classrooms including Kelley's Point on Guemes Island and the Samish Flower Farm property on Samish Island. The Committee discussed the Kids on the Beach program as a possibility for this grant opportunity, but Padilla Bay would need to be willing to take the lead. Jude said Padilla Bay would probably be supportive of this, but would need more time and more information before making any commitments.

The overall consensus of the Committee was that although this seemed like a really great opportunity, there just wasn't enough time to meet the December 13th application deadline. Tracy will let Mira know that Skagit MRC will have to decline unless the application deadline can be extended.

Northwest Straits Foundation's Boeing Stormwater Grant Update: Diane Hennebert

The engineering firm selected four potential sites for rain gardens in Anacortes. The fifth site has not been confirmed yet. One potential site is located at the Mount Erie Elementary School bus loop. Although the treatment area at this location isn't very large, there is a lot of potential for education and outreach opportunities. The Anacortes High School Green Club expressed interest in helping with the outreach at this site as a joint project between the City and the School District. The rain garden

signs are almost complete. Because the future of the bike park is not a sure thing, there will not be any references to the bike park on the signs. Deliverables are due at the end of this month. Diane thanked the MRC for applying for this grant and said she will have more information to share at the January MRC meeting.

Miscellaneous Events and Announcements: *All*

- Boat Yard Facility Pollution Violation: Dept of Ecology has issued a \$30,000 penalty to the Marine Service Center boat yard facility in Anacortes, for stormwater runoff of heavy metals, copper and zinc, into Fidalgo Bay. Apparently, the permit violations have been going on for at least five years. But the issue wasn't brought forward to other stakeholders until a citizen filed a complaint about the blue dust on their windshield from the boat yard. Pete said the Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve Citizen Stewardship Committee and RE-Sources are putting together a workshop for boatyard staff to help them better understand the permit requirements and Best Management Practices for stormwater runoff. An inspector will be on hand to show them what they will be looking for and to help answer questions.
- Padilla Bay Eelgrass Seed Dispersal Study: Sylvia Yang will be working fulltime for Padilla Bay in January as the new Research Program Coordinator. Padilla Bay has applied for funding to explore seed dispersal as a new restoration mechanism for eelgrass restoration on the west coast. This method is commonly used on the east coast, but not on the west coast. As part of this study, they will also be looking into the possibility of Padilla bay as a regional donor source of the eelgrass seed.
- Skagit Land Trust's Annual Membership Meeting - Jan 23rd: 5:30pm-7:30pm at the Burlington Community Center. Please take the [online survey](#) to help the Skagit Land Trust rank Community Conservation Priorities. It takes just four minutes!

The meeting adjourned at 11:10 am. The next MRC meeting will be held January 9, 2020 at the Skagit County Administration Building in Mount Vernon