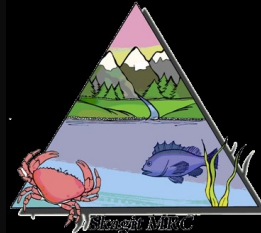


Skagit County MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

2019 Annual Report



"Skagit County Marine Resources Committee acts as a catalyst for the protection and restoration of the marine waters, habitats and species of Skagit County to achieve ecosystem health and sustainable resource use"



The projects in this report have been funded wholly or in part by the United States Environmental Protection Agency. The contents of this document do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the Environmental Protection Agency.

A Message from the MRC Chair, Betsy Stevenson

2019 was an exciting year for the Skagit Marine Resources Committee, celebrating our 20th anniversary! A special presentation by distinguished speakers shared with the Skagit County Board of Commissioners some of the excellent work and programs of the MRC over these 20 years - Olympia oyster restoration, pinto abalone restoration, Bowman Bay and many other nearshore restoration projects, derelict gear removal, creosote inventory and removal. Developing citizen scientist volunteers through the Salish Sea Stewards training who help with monitoring nearshore restoration sites, marine water quality monitoring, forage fish surveys and reporting, kelp surveys by kayak, green crab surveys, beach clean ups, and outreach opportunities at various events. Special events and education programs including Fidalgo Bay Day, Kids on the Beach, shoreline landowner workshops, and ocean acidification workshops. Special thanks to Sarah Tchang for her leadership as Chair of the MRC for most of the year. It was my pleasure to step in upon her departure. I look forward to what lies ahead in 2020. We face new challenges in uncharted waters, but we have found that, as a group, we are collaborators, problem solvers, doers, thinkers and helpers. Let's not go back to normal. If we go back to the way things were, we will have missed the lesson. Let's work together and do better.



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SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE



Background:

Established in 1999, the Skagit County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) is one of seven citizen-advisory committees formed under the congressionally authorized Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative (NWSI) as part of a grassroots effort to protect our marine resources.

Goals and Benchmarks:

- 1) Protect and restore marine populations and the health of the local marine waters, habitats, and shorelines to sustainable levels;
- 2) Collect high quality data and promote its use and dissemination; and
- 3) Promote stewardship and understanding of Skagit County marine resources through education and outreach.

To learn more:
www.skagitmrc.org

Skagit MRC Members: Appointed by Commissioners and represent diverse interest y the Skagit County Board of groups including: local government, tribes, Ports, conservation organizations, marine scientists, industry, knowledgeable citizens, and sport and commercial fishing.

Administrative Support: Provided by the Natural Resources Division of the Skagit County Public Works Department and is partly funded through the Clean Water Program.

Meetings: MRC meetings occur the second Thursday of each month from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Meetings are open to the public and rotate between Anacortes and Mount Vernon. Guest speakers are invited to present different topics related to the marine environment.

MRC members contributed over 1,354 volunteer hours in 2019!!

MRC Member	Interest Group
Tracy Alker (Staff Support)	Skagit County Public Works
Jude Apple Alt: Suzanne Schull	Padilla Bay NERR
Todd Mitchell Alt: Nicole Casper	Swinomish Tribe
Rachel Best Alt: Darla G Smith	Citizen
Nate Biletnikoff/ Brian Robson	Shell Puget Sound Refinery
Phyllis Bravinder (NWSC Alt Rep)	Citizen
Paul Dinnel	Marine Scientist
Pete Haase (NWSC Rep)	Citizen
Lynne Jordan/Kathy Thornburgh Alt: Kari Odden	Skagit Land Trust
Jay Lind (NWSF Rep)	Sports & Commercial Fishing
Diane Hennebert	City of Anacortes
Betsy Stevenson (MRC Chair)	Skagit County Planning Dept.
Sarah Tchang / Kevin Anderson	Port of Anacortes
Todd Woodard/Matt Castle Alt: Jodi Bluhm	Samish Indian Nation

Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative



Marine Resources Committees



Whatcom • Clallam • Jefferson • Skagit • San Juan • Island • Snohomish



The NWSC serves as the "board of directors" and is comprised of five gubernatorial representatives, one tribal representative appointed by the Secretary of the Interior, and one representative from each of the seven county-based Marine Resources Committees (MRCs) including Skagit, Whatcom, Island, Snohomish, San Juan, Jefferson, and Clallam counties. The NWSC provides base funding for the operations and action projects of the MRCs. The NWSC also provides technical assistance, tools, resources, training and coordination among MRCs, and integrates work with a regional focus. The NWSC has four full-time staff and holds an annual training conference each year for all MRC members: To learn more: www.nwstraits.org.



The Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) Serves as the non-profit extension of the Initiative. The NWSF works with the MRCs to identify and pursue additional funding from public and private sources to help leverage support for MRC priority projects and supplement the core federal support for MRCs. The NWSF also manages the **derelict fishing gear removal program, nearshore restoration**

and monitoring, and shoreline landowner workshops in partnership with the MRCs. To learn more: www.nwstraitsfoundation.org.

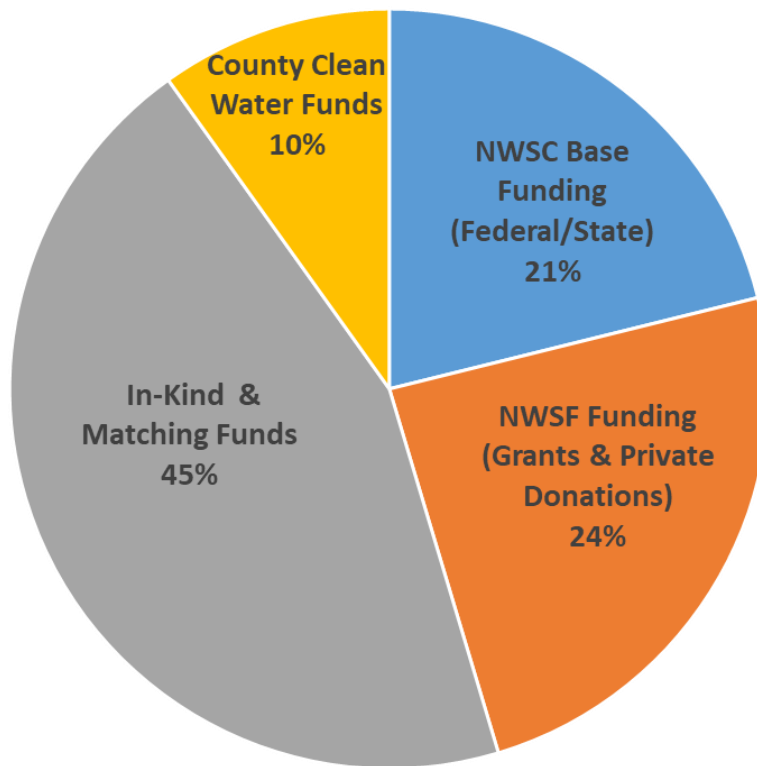
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2019 SKAGIT MRC FINANCIAL SUMMARY

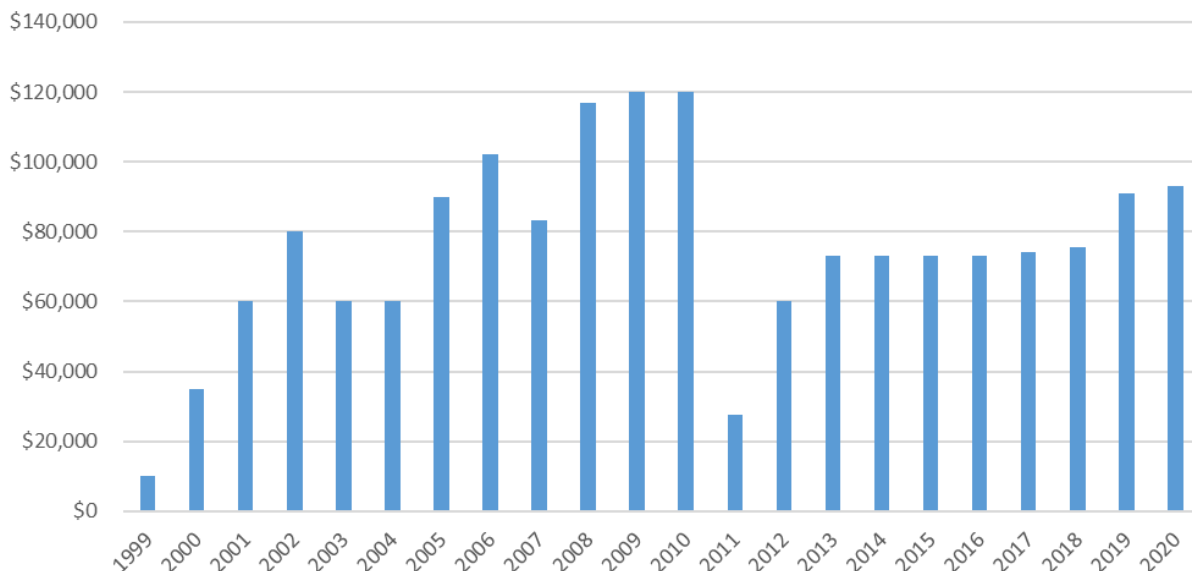
Projects	Skagit MRC Project Leads	NWSC Grant (EPA/PSP)	NWSF (Grants & Private Donations & Estimated In-Kind Values)	County Clean Water Funds	Other Funding Sources & In-Kind Support (Estimated Values)
MRC Operations	Tracy Alker	\$23,900	\$0	\$2,659	MRC member volunteer hours
Fidalgo Bay Day	Pete Haase	\$1,900	Staff support for beach seining (\$100)	\$0	in-kind (Samish Indian Nation's Facility, seafood donations, insurance, etc.)
Salish Sea Stewards	Rachel Best	\$19,900	Staff support to teach classes (\$100)	Staff support to teach classes	Friends of Skagit Beaches provided funding for facility rental, background checks, t-shirts, and speaker gifts. Speakers donated time and Volunteer hours for all projects
Kids on the Beach	Pete Haase	\$8,900	Staff support to coordinate volunteers (\$50)	\$0	Samish Indian Nation's facility and staff assistance. Swinomish Several volunteer hours provided for beach activities
Bowman Bay Restoration	Jay Lind	\$2,400	Staff support (\$50)	\$0	Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group provided plants for planting in the fall. Volunteers provided many hours maintaining newly planted vegetation
Pinto Abalone Restoration	Paul Dinnel	\$18,000	\$0	\$0	WA Dept of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and WA Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) funding for hatchery management and outplanting
Nearshore Restoration Monitoring	Jason Morgan (NWSF)	\$0	\$15,000 Skagit Restoration Initiative (SRI) funds for monitoring	\$0	Volunteers provided many hours monitoring the shorelines
Forage Fish Surveys	Pete Haase	\$0	\$0	\$0	WDFW staff time to process & analyze samples. Volunteers provided many hours conducting surveys
Kelp Surveys and Recovery	Phyllis Bravinder	\$0	\$0	\$0	Volunteers provided many hours conducting kayak kelp surveys
Crabber Outreach	Susan George (SSS Volunteer)	\$0	\$10,000	\$0	Volunteers provided many hours conducting crabber outreach
Native Oyster Restoration	Paul Dinnel	\$0	\$0	\$0	Puget Sound Restoration Fund provided additional oyster shell and seed. WDFW provided oyster string tiles. Volunteers provided hundreds of hours monitoring oysters
Fidalgo Bay Property —Water Quality Study	Karri Odden/ Lisa Kaufman (NWSF)	\$0	\$860 Skagit Restoration Initiative Funds.	\$0	Skagit Land Trust Matching Funds
Kukutali Preserve Restoration/ Monitoring	Lisa Kaufman & Jason Morgan (NWSF)	\$0	\$600	\$0	8 Volunteers provided 156 hours conducting nearshore monitoring
Total		\$75,000	~ \$26,760	\$2,659	Estimated over \$100,000

SKAGIT MRC FUNDING CHARTS

2009-2019 MRC Funding



NWSC Base Funding
1999 - 2020



EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

"Promote Stewardship and Understanding of Skagit County Marine Resources"



Kids on the Beach - Conway 8th Grade: Photo Credit- Paul Dinnel

Skagit MRC's education and outreach programs are designed to reach a wide range of demographics from young kids to senior citizens

- Fidalgo Bay Day
- Salish Sea Stewards
- Kids on the Beach
- Recreational Crabber Outreach
- Skagit MRC Participation at Special Events

16th Annual

FIDALGO BAY DAY

Education and Outreach

At the Samish Indian Nation's Fidalgo Bay Resort in Anacortes



Why is it Important?

- ◆ Provides a free and fun learning experience for young kids and families.
- ◆ Increases public awareness and a sense of connection to the marine environment.
- ◆ Inspires stewardship and marine conservation.
- ◆ Builds strong partnerships.

2019 HIGHLIGHTS

- ◆ Over **400** visitors
- ◆ **50** volunteers
- ◆ Over **200** volunteer hours
- ◆ **27** participating organizations with educational displays, games, and activities
- ◆ **3** local businesses provided complimentary seafood and refreshments
- ◆ **150** discovery passport activities completed
- ◆ **25** coloring contest participants
- ◆ Kid friendly **craft tables** and face painting hosted by the Mount Vernon High School Key Club
- ◆ **Interactive Activities:** Beach seining, forage fish & birding beach walks, virtual 3-D Salish Sea diving experience, microscope activities, and a giant gray whale skull
- ◆ **Free samples** of seafood chowder, grilled shellfish, brownies, and popcorn
- ◆ Samish Indian Nation welcome and no host **salmon BBQ lunch**
- ◆ **Zero Waste** event



Did you know?

This event is planned and carried out almost entirely by volunteers!

For the full [2019 Fidalgo Bay Day report](http://www.skagitmrc.org) go to the Skagit MRC website: www.skagitmrc.org.

THANK YOU to the leadership of Jay Lind (Event Chair) and to all of the wonderful volunteers and partner organizations. In particular, thanks to Friends of Skagit Beaches for once again sponsoring the Passport Activity and the Samish Indian Nation for hosting the event at their beautiful facility. A special thanks to the local businesses for their generous contributions: Taylor Shellfish, Adrift, Gere-A-Deli, and the Anacortes Boys & Girls Club.

SALISH SEA STEWARDS



Salish Sea Stewards Class of 2019

Why is it Important?

- ♦ Fosters stewardship of the marine environment.
- ♦ Builds and maintains a solid base of dedicated volunteers in marine conservation.
- ♦ Builds strong partnerships.
- ♦ Our volunteers are boots in the mud. We couldn't do this important work without them!



Over
32,767
Total
Volunteer
Hours!!!



THANK YOU to Rachel Best (MRC Project Lead) and the Salish Sea Stewards Advisory Subcommittee for overseeing the program and to the Friends of Skagit Beaches for continued support.

2019 HIGHLIGHTS

- ♦ **40 hours** of free volunteer **training**. **10 sessions** taught by **25 professional experts** in the **classroom** and the **field**.
- ♦ **21 citizen scientists** completed the training in 2019 and logged over **543 volunteer hours** in just **4 months**!
- ♦ **151 Salish Sea Stewards** have been trained and contributed **over 32,767 volunteer hours** since 2014!
- ♦ In 2019, **21 dedicated volunteers** contributed **over 100 hours** in our community in just one year!
- ♦ Salish Sea Stewards **support over 35 local programs**.
- ♦ **531 subscribers** to the Salish Sea Stewards electronic news bulletin "**The Wave**". **345 Salish Sea Stewards Facebook followers**. Up 47% from 2018.
- ♦ Completed a **Volunteer Needs Assessment and Program Recommendations Report**
- ♦ **5 newspaper articles** about the Salish Sea Stewards in 2019.
- ♦ Over **2,236 volunteer hours** logged in **2019**!

To learn more about the [2019 Salish Sea Stewards program](http://www.skagitmrc.org) go to: www.skagitmrc.org.

KIDS ON THE BEACH



Why is it Important?

- ◆ Increases marine science IQ in Skagit County 8th graders that do not have regular access to marine habitats.
- ◆ Offers a hands-on scientific research project to support student prep for first statewide testing on the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS).
- ◆ Increases student 'buy-in' of science by generating useful scientific data.
- ◆ Nurtures the interest of young students in pursuing a course of study in marine science.
- ◆ Imparts the importance of science communication through a student science symposium.



THANKS to Mira Lutz with SeaDoc Society, Padilla Bay NERR Staff, and Pete Haase (MRC Project Lead), and our many volunteers for making this amazing program a huge success!



Over **226**
Volunteer
Hours!

2019 HIGHLIGHTS

- ◆ A combined total of **100 8th grade students** from **Conway** and **La Conner Middle Schools** participated.
- ◆ **25 volunteers** assisted with beach activities and the science symposium.
- ◆ Students developed proposals and **collected real scientific data** that will be used by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.
- ◆ Students **assessed the effects of beach restoration** on surf smelt egg mortality and nearshore fish populations and biodiversity and presence of salmon
- ◆ Students presented their research at a **science symposium** at Padilla Bay.
- ◆ Student's pre-and post project quiz results indicated **increased knowledge of the marine environment**.
- ◆ **2 newspaper articles** about the program.

To see the full [2019 Kids on the Beach report](http://www.skagitmrc.org) go to: www.skagitmrc.org.



RECREATIONAL CRABBER OUTREACH



Salish Sea Stewards learn about derelict crab pots and safe crabbing techniques

Why is it Important?

- ◆ **12,000 crab pots** are lost each year in Puget Sound. These lost pots continue to capture and kill an estimated 180,000 crabs each year which equates to fewer crabs available to harvest.
- ◆ Providing education and outreach to recreational crabbers helps reduce the number of crab pots and crabs lost each year.

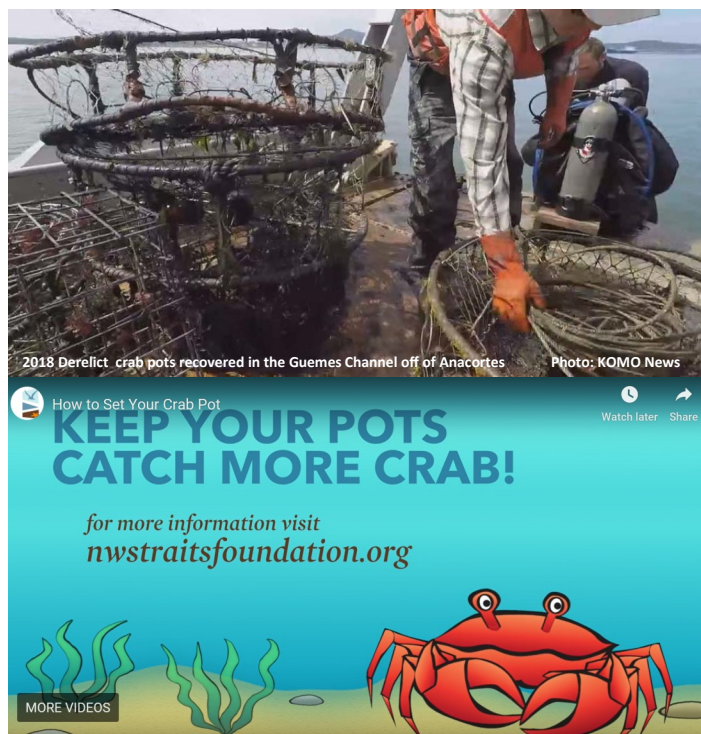
Over **19** Volunteer Hours!

LOCAL HIGHLIGHTS

- ◆ **5 volunteers** engaged with **167 crabbers and the general public**, at two public boat launches on opening weekend of crabbing season.
- ◆ Handed out **67 crab measuring gauges** and discussed safe crabbing techniques on their **"Catch More Crab" rack cards**.
- ◆ Distributed **6,250 "Catch More Crab" rack cards** to recreational boaters through the **Port of Anacortes** and **Samish Indian Nation Department of Natural Resources**.
- ◆ **Salish Sea Stewards training** included a session on derelict crab pots and safe crabbing techniques.

NORTHWEST STRAITS INITIATIVE'S REGIONAL ACTIONS (SINCE 2002)

- ◆ Removed over **5,800 derelict crab pots** in the **NW Straits region**, including **1,070** from Skagit County 's marine waters.
- ◆ Researched the effectiveness of crab pot escapement mechanisms.
- ◆ Developed outreach materials and educational videos:
www.nwstraitsfoundation.org/project/recreational-crabbing-resources/.
- ◆ **#CatchMoreCrab** social marketing campaign to share best crabbing strategies:
www.nwstraits.org/our-work/catch-more-crab/.



Thanks to Susan George, a Salish Sea Steward volunteer, for taking the lead in coordinating this effort and to our many dedicated volunteers!!

PARTICIPATION AT SPECIAL EVENTS



Skagit MRC's 20th Anniversary Celebration
with Skagit County Board of County Commissioners

Why is it Important?

- ◆ Increases public awareness and builds community support in protecting our marine resources.
- ◆ Fosters stewardship and volunteerism.
- ◆ It's a great opportunity to share information, build partnerships, and learn about other conservation and restoration efforts happening in the community.

2019 HIGHLIGHTS

Volunteers and MRC staff **hosted the MRC display** and activities at the following events:

- ◆ Mount Vernon High School Science Night
- ◆ Fidalgo Bay Day
- ◆ Skagit River Salmon Festival

Skagit MRC **celebrated 20 years** with a **proclamation** signed by the Skagit County Commissioners. **8 speakers** shared stories about the positive impact of the MRC.

Skagit MRC representatives attended **55** meetings, workshops, lectures, and conferences to share information and stay up to date on the issues impacting the Salish Sea and our marine resources.



Salmon Festival—MRC Passport Station

MVHS Science Night Forage Fish Eggs



Skagit River Salmon Festival—MRC and County Booth



Mount Vernon High School Science Night—Stormwater Pollution Game

CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION

“Protect and restore marine populations and the health of the local marine waters, habitats, and shorelines to sustainable levels”



- Pinto Abalone Restoration
- Bowman Bay Nearshore Restoration
- Olympia Oyster Restoration
- Nearshore Restoration Monitoring
- Forage Fish Index Surveys
- Kayak-based Kelp Surveys

PINTO ABALONE RECOVERY



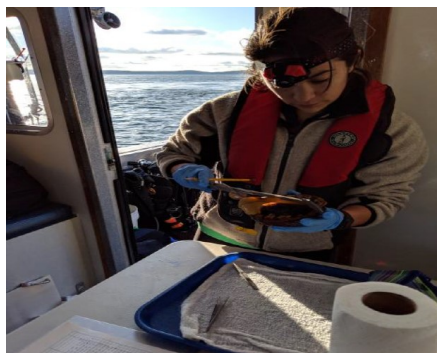
Why is it Important?

- ♦ The pinto (northern) abalone, *Haliotis kamtschatkana*, is Washington State's only known species of abalone.
- ♦ Pinto abalone are an important part of a healthy diverse marine ecosystem and a highly valued recreational shellfish resource.
- ♦ In 2019, the state listing of pinto abalone changed from "Species of Concern" to "Endangered."
- ♦ The pinto abalone population is severely depleted and cannot recover on its own.
- ♦ Pinto abalone recovery is a collaborative effort lead by the Puget Sound Restoration Fund (PSRF) and is one of the main goals identified in the 2011 Washington Shellfish Initiative.



2019 HIGHLIGHTS

- ♦ **Primary goal:** create **sustainable spawning populations** of pinto abalone.
- ♦ An estimated **11,400** hatchery produced juvenile pinto abalone outplanted at **8** sites in Skagit County waters since 2009.
- ♦ In 2019, **2,161** juvenile abalone representing 26 genetically distinct families (**both younger and older year class**) were seeded together at **two new** outplant sites in Skagit County.
- ♦ **Completed a 2.5 year study** investigating survival and growth of **younger-aged outplants** in February 2019 to improve annual production cycles in the hatchery,
- ♦ **Monitored movement, growth, density, and survivorship** of past introductions of hatchery reared juvenile abalone.
- ♦ Initiated a **genetic assessment** of pinto abalone.
- ♦ **Article** posted in the Skagit Valley Herald.



BOWMAN BAY NEARSHORE RESTORATION



Why is it Important?

- ◆ Bowman Bay nearshore restoration is a collaborative project of the Skagit MRC, NWSF, Deception Pass State Park, and the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group (SFEG).
- ◆ In 2015, 540 ft of rock riprap was removed, natural sediment transport processes restored, and 0.6 acres of nearshore habitat for forage fish, juvenile salmon and bull trout was improved. Public access to the beach was also improved and interpretive signs installed.
- ◆ Large woody debris accumulations along the beach and native vegetation planted along the upper shoreline provide important habitat and protection of the marine shoreline.



2019 HIGHLIGHTS

- ◆ **5** plant maintenance volunteer **work parties** held May—September, 2019.
- ◆ **45 volunteers** assisted with weeding and watering with a 500 gallon watering truck.
- ◆ Whale Scouts **monitored the trees and shrubs** for diversity and survival.
- ◆ Overall **plant survival** was around **66%**. Dune grass, coastal strawberries, and beach pea are doing great! Conifers and shrubs experienced lower survival.
- ◆ A few extra **spruce trees** from Cornet Bay were **transplanted** to the Bowman Bay site.
- ◆ A **soil sample** was taken to determine if the soil will need to be amended.
- ◆ Evidence of **surf smelt and sand lance spawning** were found on the Bowman Bay beach for the first time since 2003!
- ◆ Observed a **large school of herring** for the first time in 2019.

Over **105**
Volunteer Hours!



Beach visitors expressed great appreciation of the volunteers doing the work



OLYMPIA OYSTER RESTORATION



Why is it Important?

- ♦ The Olympia oyster, *Ostrea lurida*, is native to the Pacific Coast of North America. They provide valuable habitat and are an important food source for many marine species, are culturally significant to indigenous people, and help improve and maintain water quality.
- ♦ Olympia oysters are more resilient to ocean acidification than the larger non-native Pacific oysters and will help make Puget Sound more resilient as conditions continue to change.
- ♦ Olympia oysters were driven to near extinction in Puget Sound in the late 1800s from over harvesting and severe water pollution.
- ♦ One of the goals of the Washington Shellfish Initiative is to enhance 100 acres of native oyster habitat at 19 locations in Puget Sound by 2020.
- ♦ There is a coast-wide initiative from California to Washington to expand and coordinate native oyster restoration efforts.
- ♦ Since 2002, Skagit MRC has been working collaboratively with many partners and citizen scientists to establish sustainable Olympia oyster populations.

THANKS to MRC Project Lead Paul Dinnel and our many dedicated volunteers!!

2019 HIGHLIGHTS

- ♦ To date, **over 1.5 million** Olympia oyster seed have been planted and a sustainable oyster population has become established in Fidalgo Bay.
- ♦ Just under **3 Million** Olympia Oysters are now thriving in Fidalgo Bay!
- ♦ Over **42 volunteer hours** contributed in 2019!
- ♦ **Monitoring was reduced** in 2019. The more intensive surveys will now only occur every 3-5 years.
- ♦ **20 annual recruitment bags** were collected and **monitored** for oyster settlement by citizen scientists. 20 new annual recruitment bags were **distributed** in Fidalgo Bay.
- ♦ **Citizen scientists collected** Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's (WDFW) **stacks of tiles** at two week intervals throughout the summer to **evaluate post larval recruitment**. Preliminary results indicate a **fairly decent settlement in 2019**.
- ♦ **Several articles** were published in 2019 in the United Press International, the online story board: <http://tjvanariver.trnerr.org/oystermapping/>, the Seattle Times, the Encyclopedia of Puget Sound, and the newly published book on Goods and Services of Marine Bivalves.
- ♦ MRC Project Lead, Paul Dinnel, recently completed the 2018 Olympia Oyster Restoration in Fidalgo Bay and Cypress Island **Year Sixteen Report**.

NEARSHORE RESTORATION MONITORING



Over **824**
Volunteer
Hours in
2019!



Why is it Important?

- ♦ Collecting monitoring data will help measure the effectiveness of our nearshore restoration efforts.
- ♦ Healthy shoreline habitats benefit marine organisms, especially forage fish that spawn on beaches and are an important food source for salmon, marine birds and mammals.
- ♦ Results will be analyzed and shared through public access databases and future reporting. Forage fish data can be found here: <http://shoremonitor.wefactional.com/>.

THANKS to Jason Morgan (NWSF nearshore monitoring project manager) Pete Haase (forage fish survey lead) and to our many dedicated volunteers who helped no matter what the weather.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- ♦ **72 volunteers** collected 1 year of pre-construction monitoring data and 4 and 5 years of post-construction monitoring data at the Bowman Bay and March's Point restoration sites. 1-year of post-construction monitoring data was collected at the Kukutali Preserve restoration site.
- ♦ **Citizen scientists** play a critical role in collecting data and providing public outreach during monitoring events, at special community events, and for school groups.
- ♦ **Monitoring Parameters:** Beach seining for nearshore fish use and forage fish spawning surveys occurred bimonthly. Intertidal monitoring, beach profile, beach wrack/insect fallout, and large woody debris surveys occur once a year.
- ♦ **Monitoring Results:** Juvenile Chinook salmon were observed at both sites. Evidence of forage fish spawning at Bowman Bay was documented in 2019 for the first time since 2003!



FORAGE FISH INDEX SITE SURVEYS

MRCs collect forage fish spawning data at Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) Index Sites to look at annual variations in spawning activity of the forage fish population and to identify potential trends.



- ♦ **3 Skagit Index sites:** Ship Harbor/Guemes Channel, NE Similk Bay, and SW Samish Island.
- ♦ Skagit County Intern and volunteers identify and stage the eggs under a **microscope** and send samples to WDFW for confirmation.
- ♦ **Surf smelt eggs were found** at all of our sampling sites.

KAYAK-BASED BULL KELP SURVEYS



Shannon Point Kelp Bed Tour with Congressman Rick Larsen

Why is it Important?

- ♦ Bull kelp is a critical habitat for a wide variety of species. It also helps control ocean temperature, produces large amounts of oxygen, sequesters carbon dioxide, and is a source of food and nutrients for many creatures, including humans.
- ♦ There is evidence that bull kelp has significantly declined in some areas of Puget Sound likely due to: water pollution, shoreline development, climate change, over-grazing, and invasive seaweeds.
- ♦ All 7 MRCs are involved in kelp surveys to monitor changes in kelp populations, promote citizen science, and foster awareness.
- ♦ The NWSC is compiling all of the data into a regional kelp database that will be shared with local and regional planners and researchers.
- ♦ The NWSC is also developing a kelp recovery plan in collaboration with other organizations and agencies. The draft is now available for public comment.
- ♦ To learn more: www.nwstraits.org/our-work/kelp-recovery.

2019 HIGHLIGHTS

- ♦ **9 kayaker volunteers** surveyed **3 kelp beds** (Coffin Rocks, Shannon Point, and Biz Point) once a month during the peak annual growing season (July —September).
- ♦ **Hosted a kayak tour** of the kelp beds at Shannon Point with **Congressman Rick Larsen**.
- ♦ Hosted a **refresher training** for volunteers on **GPS and survey protocol**.
- ♦ Data collected since 2017 indicate the **kelp beds at Shannon Point and Biz Point** are slightly **increasing** in size. The kelp beds at **Coffin Rocks** appear to be **remaining stable**.

Kelp Survey Data is available on SoundIQ: <http://bit.ly/2FosoWn>.

Over **82** Volunteer Hours!



The Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) established the Salish Sea International Kelp Alliance and launched a regional bull kelp survey program in 2014 using a kayak-based protocol.

THANKS to MRC Project Lead Phyllis Bravinder and the lead volunteers assigned to each site: Bob Weathers (Coffin Rocks), John Freeto (Biz Point), and Brad Smith (Shannon Point)



THANK YOU!!

The Skagit MRC relies heavily on the technical, financial, and administrative support of the Northwest Straits Commission, Northwest Straits Foundation, Puget Sound Partnership, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Skagit County Public Works Clean Water program and the Skagit County Board of County Commissioners. The Skagit MRC's work is driven by our dedicated MRC members, the collaboration and shared resources of many partner organizations, and the hard work of our amazing volunteers. Thanks to all of you for making a difference!

