

Snohomish County Marine Resources Advisory Committee Meeting Meeting Summary

February 17, 2021 6:30-8:30PM

Meeting conducted via conference call/video

<p>MRC Members Present Mike Ehlebracht, Chair Natasha Coumou, Co-Vice Chair Tom Doerge, Co-Vice Chair Tim Ellis, NWSC and LIO Rep. Laura Gurley Julie Schlenger Mike Sadler Sara Maxwell Kip Killebrew</p> <p>MRC Members Recommended for Appointment Brienne Townsend Michael Kundu</p> <p>Absent Andrew Gobin</p>	<p>Staff Elisa Dawson, SWM Senior Planner and MRC Staff Alex Pittman, SWM Planner and MRC Staff</p> <p>MRC Ex-Officio Members Susan Tarpley, Citizen David Bain, Citizen</p> <p>Others Carson Moscoso, Snohomish Conservation District Bart Christiaen, WA DNR Betsy Newnum, Citizen Jon Baker, Citizen Phil Salditt, Citizen Lincoln Loehr, Citizen</p>
<p>Summary of Decisions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The MRC approved the January 2021 meeting minutes. • The MRC approved the 2021 MRC subcommittees list. 	
<p>Upcoming Events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Car Tires and Salmon Health Webinar February 19 at noon • Beach Watchers Virtual Starlight Beach Walk Event February 22 at 6:30 • Forage Fish Monitoring: February 25, March 15, and March 16 • February MRC Meeting: March 17 at 6:30 	

Welcome and Introductions

Chair Mike Ehlebracht opened the Marine Resources Committee (MRC) meeting at 6:30PM. Due to COVID-19 related stay-at-home orders, the meeting was held via conference call/video.

Mike introduced himself and asked for self-introductions on the meeting participants.

Approval of MRC Meeting Summary

Tim Ellis made a motion to approve the January 20, 2021 MRC Meeting Summary. Mike Sadler seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

MRC Subcommittees

Alex Pittman facilitated the discussion of 2021 Subcommittee roles. The draft subcommittee chart was shared on the screen. The chart was developed based on MRC input solicited over the past few weeks and included each member's preferred assignments. Alex provided a brief overview of the distribution of members proposed for each subcommittee.

Alex then opened the discussion by soliciting general input from MRC members, providing an opportunity to revise their selections for the year. Several changes were made to membership and lead roles based on MRC feedback. The final MRC subcommittees list for 2021 is on the last page of the minutes.

The first task of the 2021 subcommittees will be to review the respective website pages. Alex will send further details about this task in a follow up email. Finally, it was noted that MRC Members can switch membership of subcommittees throughout the year. MRC members should contact Alex, Elisa, and the subcommittee leads with any changes.

Plastic Free Salish Sea

Mike Ehlebracht, Alex Pittman, Elisa Dawson, Mike Sadler, Brienne Townsend, and Jonathan Robinson (WSU Beach Watchers) met via conference call on February 3rd to discuss kick off ideas for the Plastic Free Salish Sea outreach campaign. The team would like to propose kicking off the outreach with an Earth Day clean up event. The team would like to model the event after The Great Island Clean Up, which is done in San Juan County. It would be a single or multi day opportunity for participants to clean up trash, specifically emphasizing cleaning up trash at shoreline locations. Elisa is working on finding opportunities for trash collection or drop off. Additionally, the team is working on designating locations for drop off. Elisa has suggested having a drop off location within each of Snohomish County's five council districts. The MRC approved of the proposal from the team.

The team will be working to determine a name and outreach materials over the next few weeks. Additionally, Mike suggested the MRC reach out to contacts to find donations of burlap bags to use instead of plastic bags for trash clean up. The group will meet for another planning call in early March. Earth day is April 22, 2021.

Snohomish Estuary Marine Vegetation Presentation

Elisa Dawson introduced Bart Christiaen. Bart is a Natural Resource Scientist for the Washington Department of Natural Resources. He was the lead for our 2020 marine vegetation mapping project in the Snohomish Estuary which was paid for by Snohomish County Surface Water Management.

In 2020, Snohomish County signed an agreement with DNR to conduct a comprehensive survey of marine vegetation (eelgrass, understory kelp and other macroalgae) at 10 sites along the Snohomish estuary, from Hermosa Point (North of Tulalip Bay) down to Port Gardner, using methods developed for DNR's monitoring programs. This effort supplements existing and planned future sampling by DNR, and significantly increases the certainty in local estimates of eelgrass area and depth distribution over existing data from the Submerged Vegetation Monitoring Program (SVMP). It also serves as a pilot project for classification of other marine vegetation types, based on footage collected for the SVMP.

Main findings include:

1. Marine vegetation in the study area was dominated by eelgrass and green algae, which is expected for intertidal and shallow subtidal estuarine habitats dominated by sandy substrates.
2. The depth distribution of marine vegetation was similar to other sites in the Saratoga Whidbey basin, but more restricted in maximum depth as compared to Central Puget Sound.
3. We were able to assess change in eelgrass area at 6 out of the 10 sites sampled. Eelgrass area has increased over time at 3 sites along the shoreline between Mission Beach and Priest Point. Eelgrass has declined in Tulalip Bay and in the center of the Snohomish delta. The declines in Tulalip Bay are part of a longer-term trend. Declines at the center of the Snohomish delta may be due to natural variability at this highly dynamic site. Both locations are a priority for future monitoring.

The MRC discussed potential reasons for the eelgrass decline at the north end of Jetty Island. Considerations included increased sedimentation, as well as the impact of jet skis and windsurf recreation at that location. The MRC would like to follow up on possible information campaigns and restoration potential at this location. Lastly, Elisa presented a map showing the proposed eelgrass monitoring locations for 2021. Mapping this year would include Mukilteo, Picnic Point, Meadowdale, and towards Edmonds. One benefit of gathering this data in this location is to gather baseline data for Meadowdale, as well as more information in the areas we have previously monitored kelp beds. The goal is to gather the rest of the Snohomish County shoreline in 2022.

Project Updates and Announcements

- **LIO:** The next LIO meeting is scheduled for February 25 at 10:30. Tim will attend.
- **Northwest Straits Commission:** Tim reported that the process for soliciting the next round of MRC grants will be coming in March. The NWSC is monitoring marine-resources related legislation and reported that Dana Oster will be giving a presentation on kelp to the legislature. The Puget Sound Partnership is seeking nominees for their science panel. Jefferson MRC reported that they have been approached by a robotics team which is looking for projects, and one project being considered is crab pot removal.
- **Forage Fish:** The MRC is monitoring two sites at Meadowdale, two sites at Picnic Point, and two sites at Howarth Park on a monthly basis. Volunteers are permitted, and masks and social distancing are required but possible during this field work. The next sample events are February 25, March 15, and March 16. Contact Alex if you would like more information on these opportunities.
- **Meadowdale:** Meadowdale project was chosen for the Coastal Watershed Grants program and recently awarded \$250,000. This program supports projects to address urgent and challenging issues threatening our coast. Thanks to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Restore America's Estuaries for this grant.

- **Port Susan:** Alex, Elisa, and MRC Island County Staff Anna had a meeting UW Seattle Evans School Student Consulting Lab. There is the opportunity to possibly hire the Student Consulting Lab to assist with the 2021-2022 grant work. Consulting teams of three to five skilled Master of Public Administration (MPA) students dedicate approximately 10-12 hours of work each week for a period of five months (totaling 200-250 hours of work per student consultant). Students satisfy our capstone degree requirement by completing their projects over two academic quarters (January – May) and their work is supervised by experienced Evans School faculty.
- **Marine Vegetation Monitoring:** Tom provided a brief overview of the 2020 Kelp Monitoring data, which was presented by Dana Oster from the NSWC at the upcoming Kelp Season 2020 Review Meeting. The MRC will begin preparing for 2021 monitoring this spring. There is an upcoming virtual kelp webinar hosted by Clallam MRC on February 24th from 7-8pm, featuring NWSC science advisory committee member Tom Mumford.
- **Derelict Vessels:** Elisa is working with Snohomish County Contracting staff to finalize the contract with NSWf for \$45K which will effectively double the funds available for removal in 2021. Alex and Elisa will be doing initial recon for 2021 removals in March, though removal won't occur until late summer. Next, SWM staff will be meeting with partners to create a strategic list of priority boats for 2021.
- Mike reported that Car Tires and Salmon Health Webinar Feb 19 at noon, more information was included in the meeting packet
- Susan reported that the virtual Starlight Beach Walk Event is scheduled for February 22nd at 6:30PM.
- Natasha made note of an upcoming volunteer training opportunity for Green Crab Monitoring with Washington Sea Grant, to take place in March. Natasha to send additional information to the MRC.
- Laura noted that renovations to Kayak Point Park are planned for construction in 2022.
- Lincoln Loehr, citizen, made note of the Puget Sound Ecosystem Monitoring Program's (PSEMP) upcoming Annual Marine Waters Overview, scheduled for March 22nd.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30

MRC Members	Executive	MRC Grant/ Pilings Project	Derelict Vessels (Elisa Leading)	Recreational Fisheries Education	Mussel Watch	MRC Outreach	Forage Fish (Alex Leading)	Marine Vegetation Monitoring	Oil Spill	Meadowdale	Howarth Park/ Nearshore Restoration	Port Susan
Mike Ehlebracht, Chair	X				X					X		
Tom Doerge, Co-Vice Chair								X				
Natasha Coumou, Co-Vice Chair												
Tim Ellis, LIO & NWSC Rep						X					X	
Julie Schlenger												
Laura Gurley		X									X	
Kip Killebrew												
Sara Maxwell												X
Mike Sadler												
Brienne Townsend												
Andrew Gobin												
A. Michael Kundu												
Susan Tarpley, Ex-Officio				X					X			
David Bain, Ex-Officio												
TOTAL	3	7	3	3	9	7	9	7	6	2	4	6

X = Project Lead
Key Subcommittee Member
Subcommittee Member

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Laura Gurley		X									X	
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