

# Snohomish County Marine Resources Advisory Committee Meeting

## Meeting Summary

April 20, 2022 6:30-8:30PM

\*Meeting conducted via conference call/video\*

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| <p><b>MRC Members Present</b><br/>                 Mike Ehlebracht, Chair<br/>                 Tom Doerge, Co-Vice Chair<br/>                 Tim Ellis, NWSC and LIO Rep.<br/>                 Julie Schlenger<br/>                 Brie Townsend<br/>                 Sara Maxwell<br/>                 Franchesca Perez<br/>                 Allan Hicks<br/>                 Bob Margulis</p> <p><b>Absent</b><br/>                 Michael Kundu (excused)<br/>                 Natasha Coumou, Co-Vice Chair (excused)<br/>                 Laura Gurley (excused)<br/>                 Andrew Gobin (excused)</p> | <p><b>Staff</b><br/>                 Elisa Dawson, SWM Senior Planner and MRC Staff<br/>                 Alex Pittman, SWM Planner and MRC Staff</p> <p><b>MRC Ex-Officio Members</b><br/>                 David Bain, Citizen<br/>                 Susan Tarpley, Citizen</p> <p><b>Others</b><br/>                 Richard Strickland, Citizen<br/>                 Don Wilcox, Citizen<br/>                 Traci Sanderson, Citizen<br/>                 Raveena, Citizen<br/>                 Ian Miller, Washington Sea Grant<br/>                 Jonathan Robinson, WSU Beach Watchers<br/>                 Joycelyn Blue, Snohomish County SWM<br/>                 Carson Moscoso, Snohomish Conservation District</p> |
| <p><b>Summary of Decisions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The MRC approved the March meeting minutes.</li> </ul>   |  |
| <p><b>Upcoming Events</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Earth Day Beach Cleanup with WSU Beach Watchers:</b> April 23 at Picnic Point</li> <li>● <b>Salish Sea Conference:</b> April 26-28</li> <li>● <b>Next MRC Meeting:</b> May 18</li> <li>● <b>Forage Fish Monitoring:</b> May 19</li> </ul>  |  |

### Welcome and Introductions

MRC 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 of the meeting participants. After introductions, Mike read the Snohomish County Tribal Acknowledgement.

*“We acknowledge the original inhabitants of this place, the Sah ku mehu (Sauk-Suiattle Tribe), the stuləgʷábš (Stillaguamish Tribe), and the sduhubš (Snohomish) Skykomish, Snoqualmie and their successors the Tulalip Tribes. Since time immemorial, they have hunted, fished, gathered on, and taken care of these lands and waters. We respect their sovereignty, their right to self-determination and honor their sacred spiritual connection with the land and water. We will strive to be honest about our past mistakes and bring about a future that includes their people, stories, and voices to form a more just and equitable society.*”

*With this tribal acknowledgement, we open our time together by honoring the ancestors whose feet first knew these lands, and whose paddles still know the waters of what we now call Snohomish County.”*

## **Approval of MRC Meeting Summary**

Tim Ellis made a motion to approve the March 16, 2022 Meeting Summary. Brie Townsend seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

## **Sea Level Rise Planning in Puget Sound**

Elisa Dawson introduced Dr. Ian Miller. Ian Miller is Washington Sea Grant's coastal hazards specialist. He specializes in helping coastal communities with issues including sea-level rise and tsunamis. Ian's team has just completed a quantitative sea level rise assessment for all parcels bordering Puget Sound and is sharing the work with MRC's to get feedback on the results of their project and solicit input on what the next steps with the data should be.

Ian went through a presentation on his project "Prioritizing Sea Level Rise Exposure and Habitat Sensitivity Across Puget Sound." This project worked to understand which areas of Puget Sound are exposed to future flooding and erosion associated with sea level rise, and what the consequences might be of that exposure to both existing infrastructure and habitats. The methods used were spatial, GIS-based analysis at the parcel level. They combined elevation data for Puget Sound with sea level rise projections, flood magnitude estimates, and coastal asset databases (infrastructure, habitats, etc.) to examine relationships between projected sea level rise and local conditions and habitats across Puget Sound. In addition to estimates of impact based on physical features, Social scientists with National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science (NCCOS) leveraged their expertise in vulnerability assessments to support Washington Sea Grant's ongoing effort by providing overall project support, integrating human dimensions (i.e., social vulnerability) data, and adding capacity to this effort on the West Coast.

NCCOS developed a complementary social vulnerability assessment for communities within the Puget Sound region. To assess social vulnerability, the authors applied part of NCCOS's vulnerability assessment framework through application of a regionally modified Social Vulnerability Index for Zip Code Tabulation Areas within the Puget Sound drainage basin. A principal components analysis on 50 chosen variables was used to determine the components and variables to include in the final index. The final social vulnerability index included 36 variables and resulted in seven components of social vulnerability for the Puget Sound region. Components included Diversity and Urbanity; Income and Education; Age and Housing Occupancy; Isolation, Access to Social Services, and Dependence on Extractive Industries; Housing and Infrastructure; Institutional Inequities; and Life Satisfaction and Belonging. These components were adjusted for directionality and placed in an equal-weighted additive model to achieve a single, community-level social vulnerability index score. The final composite social vulnerability index was then integrated into the sea level rise vulnerability assessment led by Washington Sea Grant as a modifier for identification of co-benefits.

This project provides valuable science to decision makers, planners, and partners that will inform management decisions in the Puget Sound and support restoration activities. Without these types of analyses, coastal communities and natural habitats are at a disadvantage in the face of climate change and related impacts. Beyond its integration with the larger vulnerability assessment as an optional parcel-level vulnerability score modifier, the social vulnerability assessment can be used as a stand-alone product to inform other efforts in the Puget Sound region and offers a tool for communities and other users to summarize needs and advocate for resources for environmental justice action and adaptation in the face of climate change and sea level rise. After his presentation, Ian then opened the conversation for discussion. He specifically asked for feedback on his data, suggestions on how it might be used or where the data should be stored.

MRC Members thanked Ian for his presentation. One suggestion from the MRC was to have the GIS data available for student groups/professionals to use. The MRC also asked Ian about the five different sea level rise scenarios and their range that were used to create the model. Ian said they included a high magnitude scenario as well as near term scenarios. Also, Ian mentioned that because this is a relative ranking scenario, all sea level rise scenarios should give similar relative rankings. Several MRC Members mentioned that it would be helpful to include more transparency around the five different scenarios used when the data becomes available as they thought users would be interested in that information. Additionally, the MRC made comments around how to make the data applicable, it will need to be conveyed in an understandable and relatable format. Overall, the MRC found the data to be powerful and hopes it will be used for local decision making.

### **Meadowdale Interpretive Signage Review**

Elisa Dawson opened a discussion of draft interpretive sign designs and locations for the Meadowdale Beach and Estuary Restoration Project. Drafts of the 4 interpretive signs and a map of their locations was provided to the MRC in the meeting packet. The MRC last provided feedback on interpretive signs at Meadowdale in 2018, and these are the drafts that have been finalized since then. Parks is seeking final feedback before these signs are printed and installed in Fall 2022. There is a maximum of four signs that can be installed at this location, so all edits should assume no additional signs can be made. The MRC suggested the following edits to the signs:

“Forested Ravine” (it says watershed sign on the drawings at the overlook, is that location where this sign will be?)

- Illustration on lower right could be edited to better show the shade of the trees over the stream.
- Could add “native plants provide erosion control” to lower right graphic
- In lower right graphic say “large wood helps slow flows”
- In lower right graphic say “trees provide cooling shade”

“Reconnecting and Restoring”

- Text on upper right could be changed to “The stream erodes Ice Age deposits of sand and gravel and carries them downstream to form the beach.”
  - The interruption of sediment is mentioned in other part of this sign, and we think this sign could use less wording on it.

“Estuary Habitat”

- There is no mention about how there are also Chum and Coho found in this stream. Also sea-run cutthroat trout are in this stream, and other fish.
- The bottom center should specifically mention juvenile chinook are not natal to this stream – right now it only says juvenile salmon, there are chum who were “born” in this stream through the hatchery process by the Edmonds Stream Team.

“The Salish Sea” (it says native American sign on the drawings at the beach location, is that location where this sign will be?)

- Suggest keeping the top large text, but change the bottom center text to “Tribal communities have long recognized the importance of water and water-based resources in sustaining life in this region. For many who live here, the Salish Sea defines our region. To protect these waters and the life that depends on it, we must protect and restore habitat throughout shorelines, rivers, and streams; remove barriers to fish passage; improve water quality; and address underlying causes of climate change. You can help by practicing Leave No Trace

and picking up trash and pet waste. For more ideas on what you can do visit [PugetSoundStartsHere.org](http://PugetSoundStartsHere.org)”

- Add the website address for Meadowdale that SWM is setting up (probably won't be available until June)
- Could add a call out that says “x̣wəlč is “**Salish Sea**, saltwater” in Lushootseed”
- Ranger has asked that the mention of stopping at the Ranger's house be removed.

## **Port Susan Project Update**

Sara and Alex reported that the Port Susan team wrapped up the Stakeholder Survey and follow up Stakeholder Interviews in March. Project consultant ESA completed a draft Early Assessment Summary in early April. Overall, the survey results and information shared during interviews demonstrate strong commitment to the responsible management of the Port Susan Marine Stewardship Area from a broad range of stakeholders and community members. Key takeaways include:

- The majority of individuals who have used the plan in recent years used it to identify project or funding opportunities. This early assessment indicates many partners are not regularly utilizing the Port Susan MSA CAP. Over half of respondents indicated they have referenced the plan once in the last 1-5 years, or more than 5 years.
- Many of the same issues and challenges identified in 2012 still exist in Port Susan today. Instead of updating the Port Susan MSA CAP, respondents broadly requested a shift in focus towards implementation.
- Some objectives and strategies would benefit from additional context and framing, particularly as they relate to climate change, wellbeing, and new considerations from the past 10 years.
- When asked how to make the plan more useful, a majority of respondents chose options to cross walk the plan with the Puget Sound Partnership's Action Agenda and host biannual implementation meetings.

The joint Snohomish-Island Port Susan team met on April 6 to discuss these results, and how to approach the follow up Stakeholder Meetings this Spring and Summer based on the feedback obtained. We will likely be holding three meetings with the following general themes:

- Introductory Meeting – potentially to be held in coordination with the Snohomish-Stillaguamish and/or Island LIOs.
- Strategies & Actions Workshop
- Plan Implementation Workshop

This team will meet again in early-mid May to continue Stakeholder Meeting planning.

MRC staff and members also met on April 13 to discuss the NWSC Grant Amendment and Phase 2 of the Port Susan Project. We are drafting language based on that discussion to be reviewed by the MRC at our May meeting, and plan to submit our high-level proposal to the NWSC by the end May.

## **Project Updates and Announcements**

- **LIO:** No updates.
- **Northwest Straits Commission:** Tim Ellis reported the Key Highlights from the March 25 NWSC Meeting:

- Senator Murray secured \$3M in Congressional funding for FY22. MRCs are prioritizing projects they would like to fund with this money. The Commission is waiting for further instructions from NOAA regarding timelines and other details.
  - The NW Straits Commission is planning for future hybrid meetings, and have ordered an Owl Camera to make those hybrid meetings more effective.
  - The NW Straits Commission plans to hold an in-person conference November 18-19 at Maple Hall in La Conner. More information will be provided as planning commences.
  - Leah Robison on NW Straits Commission staff is planning a forage fish spawn monitoring training for July. Contact Leah for more information (robison@nwstraits.org)
  - The NW Straits Foundation is researching and designing an AmeriCorps marine conservation corps program. This is part of a planning grant to assess the need for a program in the Northwest Straits region. They will be reaching out to MRC staff starting in April to learn about emerging opportunities and to identify partnership opportunities where AmeriCorps members can provide capacity, knowledge, skills and abilities supporting local marine projects.
  - The next NWSC meeting is April 22.
- **NWSC Letter of Support.** Elisa Dawson announced that The NWSC recently received \$3M in federal funding for FY22. Undoubtedly, the letters of support submitted by the MRC's respective counties were highly influential in solidifying Senator Murray's support for this request. Senator Murray's office recommended submitting another \$3M congressional funding request for FY23 and requested another round of letters of support from each County. Snohomish County submitted a letter of support signed by the County Executive and all five County Councilmembers on March 30.
- **Forage Fish Monitoring:** Alex Pittman reported that March Forage Fish Monitoring was completed on March 22 (Picnic Point & Meadowdale) and March 23 (Howarth Park). April Forage Fish Monitoring for Meadowdale was completed on April 7, and Howarth Park and Picnic Point samples were collected on April 19. Monitoring at Meadowdale is on-hold again. Meadowdale beach access closed on April 11 for construction to resume, and we will resume monitoring once beach access is restored.
- **Nearshore Restoration:** Elisa reported that the Nearshore Restoration subcommittee is continuing the effort to re-work a draft one-pager on the beneficial re-use of dredged material from the Snohomish River to help facilitate discussions about this prospective opportunity for nearshore projects. The team submitted comments via email and met on April 18 to discuss the next iteration of the draft one-pager. The subcommittee hopes to share the one-pager with the MRC this summer.
- **Derelict Vessels:** Elisa Dawson reported that Snohomish County staff posted four vessels on March 28 and is currently in the process of getting bids. Removal of the vessels should start in mid-May.
- **Oil Spills:** Julie Schlenger reported that the Oil Spills Subcommittee met March 14 to discuss local Geographic Response Plans (GRPs) and other plans for the group. The group plans to meet in person soon to review documents and identify areas of focus for moving forward.

- **Marine Vegetation:** Tom Doerge reported that NWSC hosted an MRC Kelp Monitoring Season Kickoff on April 14. Tom is working on putting together the dates for monitoring this summer and asked any MRC Members who are interested in participating to please contact him or Elisa.
- **Stormwater:** Mike Ehlebracht provided an overview of his work serving on a panel for 6PPD-quinone – an oxidation product of a chemical additive in tires that is intended to prevent damage to tire rubber from ozone. Researchers recently demonstrated that 6PPD-quinone causes Urban Runoff Mortality Syndrome (URMS) in coho salmon. Mike explained that for decades, scientists noticed that coho salmon returning to urban streams throughout the Sound were dying in large amounts before being able to spawn – sometimes up to 90% or more of the return. The phenomenon is called coho prespawm mortality. From 2002 to 2009, various federal and state agencies conducted surveys on coho, Chinook, and chum salmon that use Longfellow Creek in Seattle as well as other urban creeks in Puget Sound as spawning habitat. Research confirmed the link between coho prespawm mortality and polluted stormwater runoff in our urban streams, and the term “Urban Runoff Mortality Syndrome” was coined. Coho exhibiting URMS gasp for breath, swim at the surface of the water, swim in confused circles, and can die within just a few hours. Mike explained that best management practices for filtering stormwater, such as installing raingardens, are extremely effective for this stormwater issue.
- **Earth Day 2022:** WSU Beach Watchers is hosting a beach cleanup for Earth Day at 10AM on Saturday, April 23 at Picnic Point. The MRC will be providing coffee and snacks.
- **Snohomish County Tree Ordinance:** Mike Ehlebracht reported that he personally submitted a letter on the Snohomish County Tree Ordinance that was proposed by Councilmember Dunn to be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan Update.
- **MRC Annual Report Presentation to Council:** Mike will be presenting to the Snohomish County Council’s Conservation, Sustainability and Recreation Committee on Tuesday, April 26. Alex also noted that we have hard copies of the Annual Report for each MRC member and will plan on distributing those at upcoming in-person meetings.
- **Kayak Point Park Update:** Elisa Dawson reported that an update on the Kayak Point project is on the agenda for May. Snohomish County Parks is still awaiting the final Corps of Engineer permit for phase 1 which may delay construction from this summer to next, and in the meantime, they are applying for phase 2 funding. The project still includes a new boat launch, removal of part of the existing armored shoreline sea wall, installation of a backshore berm which will improve sea level rise resiliency while enhancing native shoreline vegetation. Phase 2 also includes renovated restrooms and picnic shelters, new pedestrian circulation paths, play areas, picnic areas, parking, stormwater treatment, and utilities. Parks is seeking a letter of support from the MRC.

**The meeting adjourned at 8:30.**