



Snohomish County  
Marine Resources  
Committee



Surface Water  
Management

# Marine Resources Committee

## 2025 Annual Report

RESTORE, CONSERVE, EDUCATE

# Message from 2025 Chair

As we reflect on 2025, the Snohomish County Marine Resources Committee has made significant strides in supporting marine conservation, thanks to the dedication of our volunteers and partners.

Over 1,250 volunteer hours were contributed by our members in a variety of projects, from kelp monitoring to forage fish surveys. Following the restoration efforts at Meadowdale Beach, our work continues to provide essential data and support for local marine health. Our community outreach events and clean-up efforts engaged many citizens to raise awareness and foster responsible stewardship of our shorelines. We continued to implement our [strategic plan](#) to grow our work and collaborations with partners so we can best address pressing marine issues.

This report highlights our achievements, and I am proud to see the impact we've had in ensuring a healthier marine environment for future generations. Thank you to all who contributed to our success in 2025.

Julie Schlenger  
Chair  
Snohomish County MRC

## MRC Members



Julie Schlenger  
MRC Chair



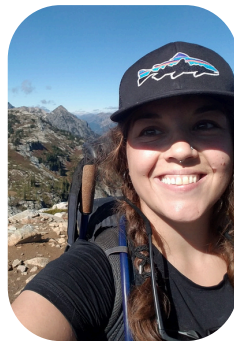
Sara Maxwell  
Co-Vice Chair



Brie Townsend  
Co-Vice Chair



Franchesca Perez  
Stillaguamish Tribe  
Representative



Natasha Coumou  
Tulalip Tribes  
Representative



Allan Hicks



Andrew Gobin



Dawn Presler



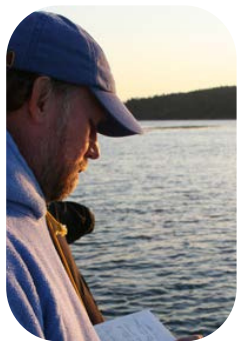
Phil Salditt



Richard Strickland



Tim Ellis

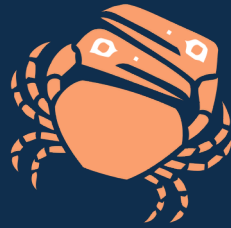


David Bain,  
Ex-Officio

# About the MRC

Established in 1999 and authorized by Chapter 2.800 of the Snohomish County Code, the Snohomish County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) is a team of 13 members, all citizen volunteers appointed by the Snohomish

County Council to advise the Council and represent diverse local interests. The members represent environmental, recreational, conservation, economic, and local and tribal government interests. Within these areas, the MRC works towards the protection and restoration of Snohomish County's marine environment.



**Snohomish County**  
Marine Resources  
Committee

## MRC Staff



**Elisa Dawson**  
Senior Planner  
Surface Water  
Management



**Joycelyn Blue**  
Planner  
Surface Water  
Management

## Learn More

- Explore [www.snocomrc.org](http://www.snocomrc.org)
- Sign up for the [MRC email distribution list](#) and [Northwest Straits Initiative newsletter](#)

## Get Involved

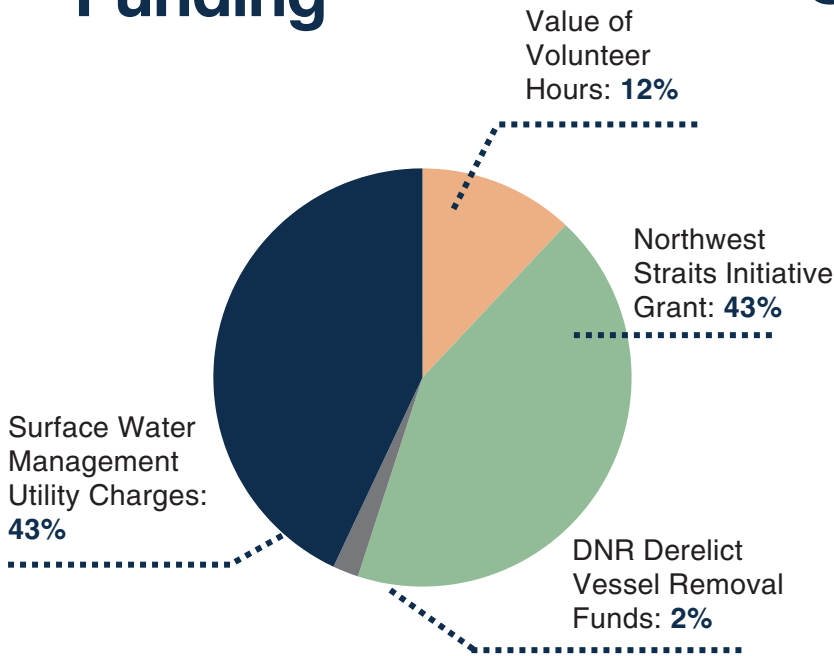
- Attend monthly MRC [meetings](#)
  - Sign up for the [MRC email distribution list](#)
- Volunteer on local projects
- Contact us at [MRC.Info@snoco.org](mailto:MRC.Info@snoco.org)



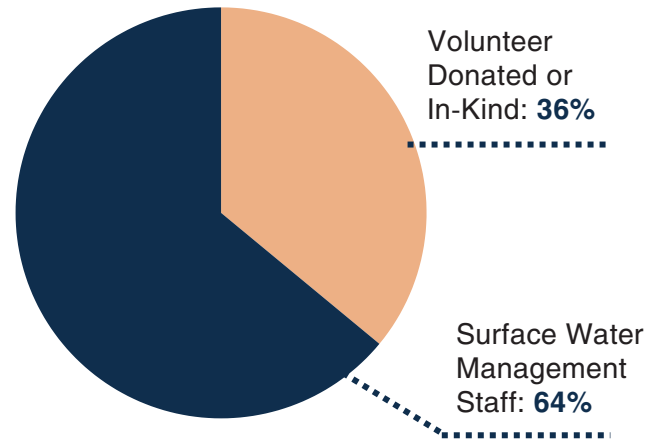
The NW Straits Commission provides coordination, technical expertise, and financial support to seven county based Marine Resources Committees (MRCs). The NW Straits Commission supports MRC-led work by connecting local priorities to broader regional efforts. Together, we work to protect and restore the region's marine waters, habitats, and species.

# Finance

## Funding



## Support



## LEVERAGING VOLUNTEERS AND GRANTS TO STRETCH LOCAL DOLLARS

In 2025, 11 members, 2 alternates, and 1 ex-officio member donated 1,250 volunteer hours to implement the MRC's annual work plan and related activities which:

- Provided a forum to mobilize citizen support of marine conservation.
- Generated and implemented practical, on-the-ground projects that benefit the ecosystem and the economy of our region.

**By leveraging county funds with grants and volunteer time, the MRC implemented cost-effective projects across Snohomish County's marine shoreline.**



**\$41.70**

Washington State's estimated value of a volunteer hour



**1,250**

Volunteer hours donated in 2025.

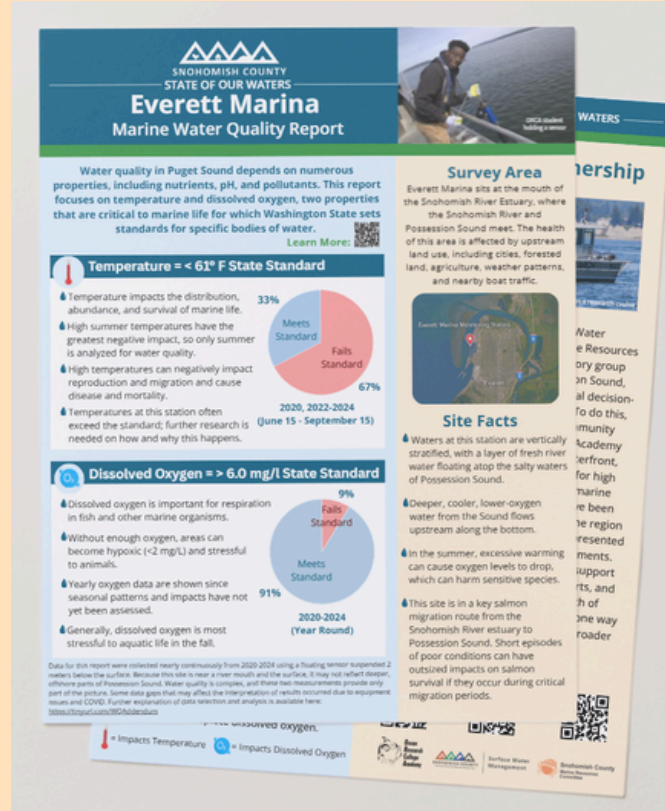
**\$52,125**

Total value to Snohomish County.

# Marine Water Quality

## Possession Sound Report Cards

From 2020–2024, the MRC teamed with the Ocean Research College Academy (ORCA) to monitor water quality in Possession Sound. ORCA is an early college program for high school juniors and seniors at Everett Community College. ORCA maintains two long-term moored instruments at Everett Marina and Edgewater Beach. They continuously record water quality data, including salinity/conductivity, temperature, pH, turbidity, dissolved oxygen, and chlorophyll concentration. In 2025, with the help of Surface Water Management (SWM) staff, the MRC and ORCA used these five years of data to produce online Marine Water Quality Report Cards for temperature and oxygen conditions at these two sites. The report cards mimic online freshwater report cards produced by the County and give insights into the state of water quality in Possession Sound.



## Marine Ecology Intern

2025 was the third year that the Snohomish MRC hosted a marine ecology intern. **Cali Weber** is completing a bachelor's degree in marine biology with a minor in data science at the University of Washington. Cali helped to create the Marine Water Quality Report Cards. She also contributed to a project to assess shoreline armoring in the county, helped with forage fish sampling and bull kelp kayak surveys, and shadowed other groups within Surface Water Management at the County.


# Forage Fish Monitoring Spawning Surveys

Forage fish species like surf smelt and Pacific sand lance play a vital role in the marine food web, supporting salmon as well as other fishes, seabirds, and marine mammals. These small fish lay their eggs on sand and gravel beaches at high tide, a use that is protected in Washington. The MRC samples for eggs during monthly surveys at Meadowdale, Picnic Point, and Howarth Park beaches. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) analyzes the samples to gauge the health of our marine areas, and to evaluate the effectiveness of restoration projects.




Adult surf smelt above; adult Pacific sand lance below.

**In 2025, forage fish eggs were observed in several samples, and the MRC achieved:**

 **216+** Total volunteer hours  
sampling beaches

 **72** Sediment  
samples taken

 **3** Beaches sampled,  
once each per month



## Meadowdale Beach Restoration Project

2025 was Year 3 of the Meadowdale Beach and Estuary Restoration Monitoring Effectiveness work, and the Year 3 report will be available soon. The planning and implementation of the monitoring program is a highly collaborative effort among many organizations, and the MRC participates by collecting forage fish samples to understand how the restoration is impacting the quality of the beach habitat. For more information on this project, visit the [Meadowdale Monitoring Project web page](#).

# Derelict Vessels

Snohomish County SWM and the MRC have worked with the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) since 2018 to support the removal of derelict boats from the Snohomish River estuary and nearshore. WA DNR and Snohomish County SWM provide funding for this effort.

Through funding from the NW Straits Commission, the MRC is researching derelict vessels in county waters to develop vessel profiles that could support vessel removal. In 2025, the Derelict Vessel Subcommittee began drafting a data framework to guide this work, scheduled for completion in 2026.



In 2025, two owner-abandoned derelict vessels were identified and removed. 22 still remain in the water awaiting future removal.

**From 2018 to 2025,  31 vessels removed.**

## Take Action!

You can report a derelict vessel using the MyCoast App: [www.mycoast.org/wa](http://www.mycoast.org/wa)



All derelict vessels are recycled or destroyed following a process to identify and work with the last known owners. Upon removal of each vessel, SWM coordinates with DNR to recoup 90+% of the project costs through [DNR's Derelict Vessels Removal Program](#).

**Derelict vessels impact aquatic habitat and threaten human safety by:**



*Creating navigational hazards*

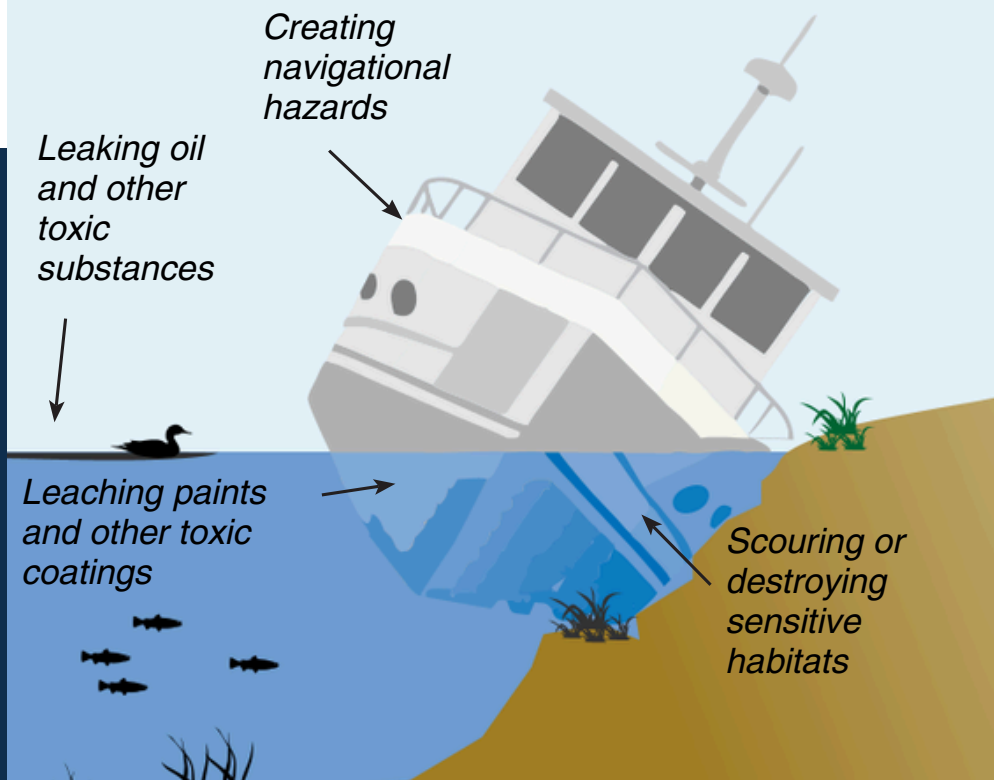
*Leaking oil and other toxic substances*



*Leaching paints and other toxic coatings*



*Scouring or destroying sensitive habitats*



# Kelp Monitoring

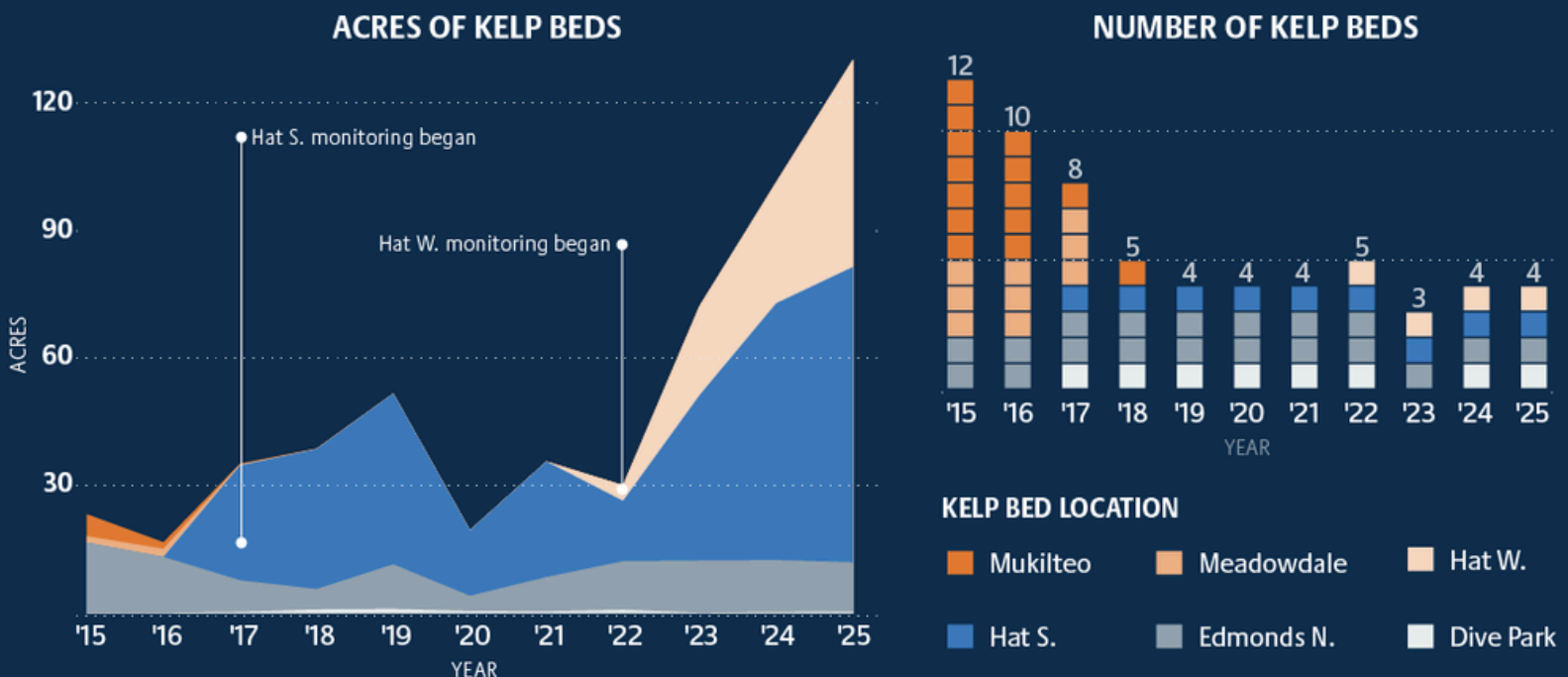
Protecting vulnerable habitat begins with gathering information. The MRC assists state and federal agencies by helping collect baseline and monitoring data for species or habitats of concern, including bull kelp. The MRC kayak surveys cover the Snohomish County nearshore between Everett and Edmonds and around Hat Island. To see us in action, check out the videos on our [website](#).



## 11 Years Tracking our Kelp Beds!

Bull kelp forests provide food and shelter to dozens of species in our marine ecosystem, including rockfish. **In the 11 years that the MRC has been monitoring Snohomish County kelp beds, the Mukilteo and Meadowdale beds have disappeared, while the Edmonds beds have fluctuated.** The MRC began monitoring Hat Island beds more recently, adding to the total kelp acreage.

**The MRC's kelp monitoring data lead to science-based decisions on how to manage this resource** and have been used to inform regional kelp planning and conservation efforts.



# Marine Vegetation Outreach

## Dive In! Event Makes a Splash in Mukilteo



Building on the success of our 2024 Edmonds kelp bed outreach event, the MRC hosted another free Dive In! event at the Rosehill Community Center in Mukilteo in September 2025. Funded by a NOAA grant, the event educated attendees about the importance of the kelp and eelgrass ecosystems of Mukilteo and Hat Island, and what the public can do to help preserve these vital resources. The event featured four speakers (a keynote from Commissioner Dunn and 3 other presenters), local artists displaying their marine photographs, and tabletop resources for the public and policy-makers to take to continue their learning.

 **1.5** hour event    
  **87** attendees  
 **4** presenters    
  **3** info sheets

## Increased Knowledge

Pre- and post-surveys were provided to the audience to gauge their understanding of the events topics. At right are the respondents' self-scored understanding both before and after the event (on a 1–5 scale with 5 being very familiar).

**These are the top four lessons that respondents reported:**

- 1) Extent and locations of marine vegetation and protection zones
- 2) Species and life cycle descriptions
- 3) Threats to kelp and eelgrass
- 4) Ecosystem benefits of kelp and eelgrass

How familiar are you with...	Avg. Pre-Event Self Score	Avg. Post-Event Self Score
The Salish Sea marine ecosystem?	3.0	3.9
The local Mukilteo and/or Hat Island kelp and eelgrass beds?	2.0	4.1
The benefits from kelp and eelgrass to our marine ecosystem and community?	3.1	4.3
The factors that can negatively impact kelp and eelgrass?	2.9	4.2
Actions you can take to protect kelp and eelgrass beds?	2.4	4.2

# Education and Outreach

## Plastic Free Salish Sea

The Snohomish County MRC supports the efforts of the **Plastic Free Salish Sea** campaign, which brings organizations, businesses, and individuals together to change the culture of plastic use across the Puget Sound area.





Every year,  
**8 million metric tons**  
of plastic enters  
our world's  
oceans.

The MRC recognizes marine debris as a major issue of concern and is taking steps to address this problem within our county. One way is through our quarterly beach cleanups with WSU Beach watchers and local community members (2025 cleanup at Kayak Point County Park pictured above). In total, these quarterly cleanups removed 395 lbs of marine debris from our shorelines!



## In Our Community

The Snohomish County MRC provides education on key issues relating to our 123 miles of shoreline, ranging from techniques used to monitoring forage fish to best management practices for shoreline landowners, recreational fishers, and other interested citizens. In 2025, the MRC published  **5 media releases** and participated in  **10 events!**

For more information, visit the **[MRC outreach and education webpage.](#)**

# Education and Outreach

## Crabber Outreach

Volunteers conducted outreach at the 10th Street boat launch in Everett on crabbing opening weekend in July, connecting with approximately 250 crabbers. The Snohomish County MRC worked with WSU Beach Watchers staff and volunteers to provide crabbers with information and products to support sustainable fishing and crabbing practices in an effort to reduce both lost traps and wildlife loss. In addition to in-person outreach, the MRC posted information on social media and issued a press release in coordination with the Northwest Straits Foundation. Videos from the campaign can be viewed on the [MRC Recreational Crabber Education web page](#).



## Lost Crab Pots

Researchers estimate that each year in Puget Sound

**12,000 crab pots** are lost, which trap and kill an estimated **180,000 crabs** annually.

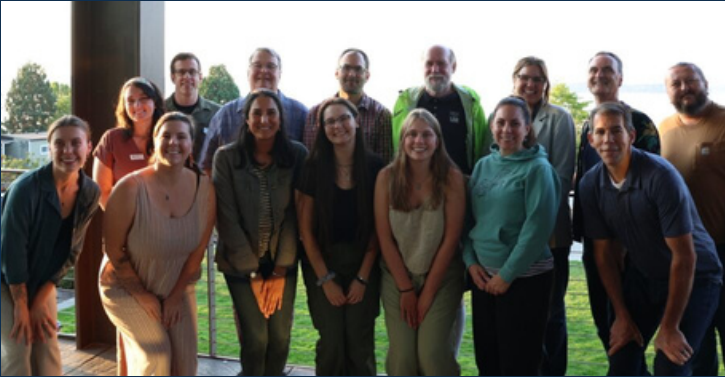


## Oil Spill Prevention

The MRC continues to follow and engage with local, state, and federal agencies to prepare for potential oil spills in our region. In 2025, the Department of Ecology made one on-call request to MRC members who are certified in handling oiled wildlife. Although active deployment was not needed, this call provided communication practice for any future spill response needs.

# Credits, Resources & Contacts

**Thank you.**



The MRC receives support from the Northwest Straits Commission, Puget Sound Partnership, Snohomish County Council and Executive Somers, the United States Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Natural Resources Derelict Vessel Removal Program and Snohomish County Surface Water Management Division for the Marine Resources Program.

Thank you to our MRC Members. Your work and dedication to protecting and restoring the marine environment is making a difference in Snohomish County.

Thank you to Surface Water Management staff and to the many other Snohomish County employees who have contributed time and expertise to the 2025 MRC projects.

We would like to recognize the Tulalip Tribes and the Stillaguamish Tribe for providing staff support and coordination for MRC Projects. The MRC acknowledges that our work resides on the ancestral lands and waters of the Coast Salish people who have called this place home since time immemorial.

## Learn More

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  - Sign up for the [MRC email distribution list](#)
- Volunteer on local projects
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