



SAN JUAN COUNTY
Marine Resources
Committee



Marine Advisory Committees

MRC-CAG-LIO

Meeting Agenda

Thursday, August 7th, 2025
9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Microsoft Teams

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9:00 AM	Convene MRC Meeting – Adam Parrott
9:05 AM	Public Comment
9:10 AM	Approve meeting agenda – All Approve MRC July meeting minutes – MRC Members
9:15 AM	Northwest Straits Commission Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none">• NWSC Meeting Report to MRC- <i>Christina Koons</i>• NW Straits Conference Planning- <i>Caitlyn Blair</i>
9:25 AM	Presentation/Discussion: OPALCO Tidal Energy Project- Heather Nicholson/MRC Members
9:55 AM	MRC Updates/Business <ul style="list-style-type: none">• MRC Chair and Vice Chair Position Nominations- <i>Sam Whitridge</i>• MRC Liaison to Climate and Sustainability Advisory Committee- <i>Sam Whitridge</i>• Update on MRC Grants for 2025-2027- <i>Sam Whitridge</i>• NWSC Meeting in San Juans on Sept 26th- <i>Sam Whitridge</i>• MRC subcommittee updates<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Outreach & Education- <i>Katie Johnson</i>○ Plastic Free Salish Sea- <i>Karin Roemers-Kleven/Katie Johnson</i>○ Seagrass Protection- <i>Beth Tate/Katie Johnson</i>○ Derelict Vessel Prevention- <i>Adam Parrott/Kari Koski</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Oil Spill/ERTV-<i>Sam Whitridge/Lovel Pratt</i>
10:25 AM	Committee member updates and any other business
10:30 AM	Adjourn MRC Meeting Convene CAG Meeting
10:30 AM	CAG Updates/Business- <i>Sam Whitridge</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final MRC/CAG Scoring and Ranking of 2025 Salmon Recovery Proposals
11:15 AM	Adjourn CAG Meeting Convene LIO Meeting
11:15 AM	LIO Business agenda <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Puget Sound Partnership Updates- <i>Jason Lim</i> • Final Planning for PSP Leadership Council Meeting/Local Forum on Aug 20- <i>Katie Johnson</i> • Healthy Shorelines Action Plan- <i>Katie Johnson</i> • LIO Priorities for upcoming 3-year contract for LIO Capacity- <i>Katie Johnson</i> • Discussion re: collective topic for next LIO Action Planning process- <i>Katie Johnson</i>
12:00 PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjourn LIO Meeting

MRC, CAG and LIO Committee Members in Attendance: Charles Bookman, David Checkley, Kailey Genter, Olivia Graham, Christina Koons, Adam Parrott, Lovel Pratt, Mike Ramsey, Karin Roemers-Kleven, Beth Tate, Joey Ullman, Sandy Wyllie-Echeverria,

Ex-officio, County support staff and members of the public: Paul Andersson, Caitlyn Blair, Gregg Dunphy, Jane Fuller, Rich Goodhart, Marta Green, Sasha Horst, Katie Johnson, Kari Koski, Jason Lim, Heather Nicholson, Frances Robertson, Kendra Smith, Shari Tarantino, Elaina Thompson, Annika Weber, Joe Weiss, Michael Weiss, Sam Whitridge, Jeff Whitty

Pre-meeting chatter: general accolades from those who saw Adam Parrott's excellent recent theater performance

9:01 AM **Convene MRC Meeting** *Adam Parrott*

9:02 AM **Public Comment** *none*

9:03 AM **Approve meeting agenda** *All*

Agenda approved, no additions, approved as is

Approve MRC July meeting minutes *MRC Members*

No edits, Christina moves to approve the minutes, Kailey seconds. All approve, none opposed, minutes approved.

9:04 AM **Northwest Straits Commission Updates**

• NWSC Meeting Report to MRC *Christina Koons*

Christina couldn't attend, Karin was there briefly. It was in person in Whatcom County. Whatcom MRC presented on their eelgrass restoration efforts, information about that on their website. There was an update about the new SoundIQ website for MRC and Commission-related data –explore the soft launch and provide feedback.

• NW Straits Conference Planning *Caitlyn Blair*

Conference registration and website should be open by next week. Conference is Nov 7-8th in LaConner, Skagit County. We have a room block – talk to staff (Katie and Sam) about reimbursement. Caitlyn reviews some details for speakers and information at the conference. Planning to highlight kelp, an artistic element <https://bullkelp.info/>, and this year plan to allow guests of attendees to the keynote dinner Friday November 7th

Jeff Whitty: Josie will have a kelp art exhibit at the San Juan Island Museum of Art Sept 26 - Dec. 1, 2025

<https://www.sjima.org/exhibitions/kelp-reverberations>

Some discussion of costs for the conference. Questions about funding for the conference should be directed toward Sasha Horst. A virtual option for the conference will be considered for the future given future funding.

Christina: we'd really like to see a solution to being able to bring more staff people to the conference.

Caitlyn: there is a capacity limit, registration will largely be first come first serve so encourage registering quickly.

Frankie: could there be a round table about potential funding models? here at SJC we've evolved into a marine program, more staff working on projects than just a single coordinator. We'd like to share that model

Caitlyn: we've incorporated that, and I'll bring back that feedback, there's a session where we could include that

And we've reserved the Grange for our PSP meeting. It's an open meeting, all are welcome to attend. We'd love to see a presentation from your MRC on Sept 26th during the meeting, I will be connecting soon to plan that

9:21 AM **Presentation/Discussion: OPALCO Tidal Energy Project**
Nicholson

Heather

Karin introduces Shari Tarantino, Michael Weiss, and Heather Nicholson.

Shari: OPALCO isn't being very transparent with this tidal turbine. They say it's quiet but added to ambient noise it can reach pain threshold for killer whales. Rosario Strait is a throughway for SRKW and salmon.

Michael: Rosario isn't the main place where SRKW can be found, but some sightings and opportunistic foraging in that area. A 10-40 decibel increase in noise range would likely affect SRKW behavior.

Heather: With respect to tidal power net benefits are all in the negative, requires a lot of supplemental support. Power output is low and costs are high. Heather shares some facts from a UK study. Heather shows scale model of tidal turbine relative to actual orca size. OPALCO plans to deploy with incomplete information e.g. they show that ferry charging will become an SJC-load. But WA energy office in Nov 2024 didn't know where ferries would charge and say local needs would be prioritized. OPALCO asserts rolling blackouts are imminent. But NW Power and Conservation Council refutes idea that blackouts would be necessary and list of measures that would be taken first.

OPALCO blog provides reasons why more local power generations is required. But must consider the type of load being added and other available routinely used resources. Heather shares resources for this presentation.

ACTION: MRC members request a copy of Heather's presentation; Sam will send it out to all the committee

Heather: it should be fine to share my slides. It's just information. I'm not trying to criticize OPALCO

QUESTIONS

-some discussion of the effects of additive decibels and the work of Dr. David Baine on noise and SRKW

Frankie: OPALCO must be required to take field data on presence of animals before permitted to put any device in. And how many devices would be needed to make this commercially viable? Why a ten-year pilot, and then what?

Shari: they've said if this pilot does go through, they'd look to install four of five

Frankie: This is a good repository for published studies and reports for tidal energy; put tidal energy into the search function, [Research Publications | Pacific Northwest National Laboratory](#)

Jane: it sounds like MRC still needs to deliberate on how to advise Council. This presentation wasn't just critical of OPALCO's plans but also their estimates of energy needs. I encouraged you very clearly to invite OPALCO here to answer questions. Instead, we heard a presentation that pokes a lot of holes in OPALCO's projections. As a councilperson now I want to seriously weigh some of what OPALCO has presented. I feel we have some important future considerations to contemplate, we're being shortsighted if we don't consider energy needs ten years down the road etc. I value this body's viewpoints; consider your responsibility to weight a variety of points of view

Heather: we need to have accurate information from which to make decisions. I would suggest familiarizing yourself with the information in the presentation and contacting OPALCO directly with questions.

Dave: OPALCO would be pleased to provide information to the MRC. I propose we come up with questions in writing to present to OPALCO. The deadline for comment on the application is September 30th. After we hear back from OPALCO, we can come up with our list of pros and cons to provide to Council.

Adam: we had a presentation on this from OPALCO in January, that's what started this discussion, we're just split.

Lovel: the MRC exists to advise Council on marine issues. Although there isn't consensus, we can come up with a list of recommendations for the Council to focus on. I think we need to schedule an additional meeting for the entire committee. We don't need to wrestle with future energy needs so much as evaluating the impacts of this project.

Adam: if we are making a recommendation to Council we have a timeline. We want responses from OPALCO

Kendra: This would need to be done for September 8th Council meeting, so must prepare by September 1.

ACTION: Sam can work to schedule that meeting for the second half of Augst.

ACTION: Dave can work on a list of questions to present to OPALCO that we can circulate around to others

MOTION: Dave moves we hold a special meeting to discuss this in the second half of August. Charles seconds

Shari: Here's a letter we sent to the WDFW Commission in Dec. 2024,

<https://www.orcaconservancy.org/blog/growing-concerns-regarding-tidal-turbines-in-srkw-critical-habitat>

Heather: thank you, and there needs to be a clear cut trail of justification for doing this project and have it add up.

10:26 AM **MRC Updates/Business**

- MRC Chair and Vice Chair Position Nominations

Sam Whitridge

Adam and Karin have been in those leadership positions for a year now, they are both eligible for renewal.

Adam: I enjoy serving on the MRC, I'd be glad to continue

KARIN: I'm happy to continue as well as long as Adam is present for every meeting

MOTION: David moves Adam continue as Chair and Karin as Vice-Chair, Sandy seconds. All approve. So moved.

- MRC Liaison to Climate and Sustainability Advisory Committee

Sam Whitridge

Dave has expressed interest and has attended the July meeting, and he's happy to serve as liason.

MOTION: Adam moves for Dave to be our liaison to this committee. Lovel seconds. All in favor, none opposed.

- Update on MRC Grants for 2025-2027

Sam Whitridge

For the new biennium we just entered, it appears our NOAA and EPA funding is being awarded for next two years.

- NWSC Meeting in San Juans on September 26th

Sam

Whitridge

We are invited to make a presentation at this meeting, any ideas and anyone who'd like to present?

Frankie: it may be good to present the vessel study we've been conducting and the map tool

Kendra: I'd also suggest advancing MRC's beyond being tied to grants, looking at strategies to support local funding.

ACTION: Caitlyn and Sasha can run those two concepts by the Commission; Caitlyn will connect and follow up

- **MRC subcommittee updates**

- o Outreach & Education

Katie Johnson

Summer interns have been leading dock talks and those are going well those, passing out whale warning flags.

Beth & I met with DNR to discuss Cattle Point signage. They're planning improvements to the building exterior

The MRC youth member resolution was passed by Council. We have a few good leads on applicants. Sandy and Kailey will conduct interviews, if you want to help please reach out. Our goal is to have new youth member start in October. We'd like to come back to September meeting with a recommendation (Karin offers to help!)

SJC fair is coming up, MRC will have a booth there in conjunction with ES. I'll send out an email with more information about times etc. Encourage everyone to stop by!

o Plastic Free Salish Sea

Karin Roemers-Kleven/Katie Johnson

Katie: PFSS is doing a litter critter lab at the fair Thursday at 2pm using recycled materials to make some fun critters. Save the date for the great islands clean up in the fall in October. Starting back up with monthly beach clean-ups.

o Seagrass Protection

Beth Tate/Katie Johnson

Beth: we're collaborating with Labs and DFW on their eelgrass stressor HSIL.

Frankie: did the first test survey flight for project sites, two more upcoming – testing methods for counting vessels.

Katie has been doing a fabulous job trying to get more vessel counts in – thanks to everyone submitting those. We've had some interest from some Orcas residents to help with that. Collecting these data is important.

Karin: SJI Museum of Art has a display on kelp. There will also be a kelp soiree, maybe some snacks and cocktails

o Derelict Vessel Prevention

Kari Koski

We have had several Derelict Vessel (DV) & marine debris events in July & early Aug- resulting in 3 VTIP (voluntary turn-in program) and 2 DV removals and 3 significant marine debris removals from private beaches working with DNRs WA MDRP who are up in the islands through August. Getting excited for the Kelp Soirée in September!

o Oil Spill/ERTV

Sam Whitridge/Lovel Pratt

Subcommittee hasn't met, but Lovel will report some other information in next agenda item

10:47 AM Committee member updates and any other business

Lovel: There's a rulemaking process coming up in 2026, opportunities for making recommendations to Council etc.; a rulemaking to expand tug escort requirements. This is an important oil spill prevention measure.

Advocacy for an ERTV got complicated with current tensions between US and Canada, more challenging now.

Jane: back to that rulemaking and the potential for modifying requirements for tugs, if there's work Council can do in support of that please keep us posted. And want to reinvigorate that relationship with Islands Trust partners

10:52 AM Adjourn MRC Meeting, Convene CAG Meeting

10:53 AM CAG Updates/Business

Sam Whitridge

• Final MRC/CAG Scoring and Ranking of 2025 Salmon Recovery Proposals

Sam shares slides about the 2025 Salmon Recovery Grant Round. This was a complicated year with some funding uncertainties and other moving parts. There are three projects proposed (there was an additional eelgrass project from the CD that did not get passed by the TAG).

Sam shares allocation estimates. We have our allocation from Riparian funding and the regular annual SRFB allocation. Then we had an unexpected windfall because PSP was able to fund the Jackson Beach project, returning those funds. A small part of that went towards completing the funding gap in Friends of San Juans' Neck Point project. Then, we secured three loans from other lead entities – Stillaguamish Watershed, Island County, and Whatcom County. They all had funds they couldn't use and next year will be a PSAR year in which we'll have more funds and it'll be easier for us to pay back this amount.

Scoring: the TAG gave green scores on all three projects. They initially had some uncertainties about the Outer Islands Landowner Willingness process and there are some confidentiality issues. This was resolved by building in some oversight so TAG can ensure outreach is happening in locations where habitat is truly valuable. Sam shows combined scores for Benefit to Salmon and Fit to Plan. Column for socioeconomic benefit shows CAG scores – thank you for submitting those. Our scores shake out to show the Cascade Creek acquisition as the clear top priority, Upright Head Habitat restoration is second-ranked, and the Outer islands Landowner Willingness is third.

MOTION: Adam moves to approve submitting the ranked list for 2025 SJC Salmon Recovery proposals as follows, 1.Cascade Creek, 2.Upright Head, and 3.SJC outer Islands. Sandy seconds.

DISCUSSION

Jane: I note the price tag for the Upright Head restoration, that's the same organization that asked for the cost increase for the Neck Point project. Is a cost increase something you foresee with this project?

Sam: in this climate, costs are hard to predict but Friends generally does an excellent job. The Neck Point cost increase dealt specifically with discussions with that project's contractor

About the loans with other entities, we've done this before, it's fine if the money is intended for the same type of project. They are not interest-bearing loans, just documented with the RCO and SRFB

Kendra: it's also goodwill with money exchange, previously we've loaned our money to some of these entities. So it comes back around and this is one of the few times we've had to borrow back. As for Friends of SJ's – you look at that cost number relative to the size of the site and it highlights how expensive it is to bring an area back once rock is placed on it. Sometimes more costly to remove than it is to put in place.

Sam: that's why our Salmon recovery chapter prioritizes protection over anything else. And it's a testament to how we've built out the salmon recovery program that we need more funds now to support all our proposals

Calling the motion – all in favor of approving the ranked list as presented?

Lovel abstains due to recusal, all else in favor, nobody opposed. So moved

That brings this grant round to a close! Thanks everyone. Thanks, Sam, for all the hard work on a complicated round

11:13 AM **Adjourn CAG Meeting**