

SAN JUAN COUNTY
Marine Resources Committee

SAN JUAN LOCAL INTEGRATING ORGANIZATION

Marine Advisory Committees
MRC-CAG-LIO
Meeting Agenda

Thursday, October 1st, 2026
9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

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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 September meeting minutes** – *MRC Members*
9:15 AM	**Discussion re: Canadian West Coast Oil Project and comments submitted by Dept of Ecology to the Canadian Major Projects Office-** *Brian Kirk, WA Dept of Ecology*
9:40 AM	**Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Updates-** *Mike Ramsey*
9:50 AM	**MRC Updates/Business** • Oct 6th San Juan MRC meeting with U.S. Rep. Rick Larsen– *Frances Robertson/Sam Whitridge* • MRC comments on proposed changes to the mooring buoy statute- *Frances Robertson* • NW Straits Commission Conference and San Juan MRC Collaborative Networking Activity- *Sam Whitridge* • MRC Annual Retreat Planning- *Sam Whitridge* • Update/Discussion re: MRC Youth Membership- *Sam Whitridge/Katie Johnson* • Discussion re: San Juan County designated seat on the San Juan MRC- *Sam Whitridge* • MRC subcommittee updates ○ Outreach & Education- *Katie Johnson*

	○ Plastic Free Salish Sea- *Karin Roemers-Kleven/Katie Johnson* ○ Seagrass Protection- *Olivia Graham/Katie Johnson* ○ Derelict Vessel Prevention- *Adam Parrott/Kari Koski* ○ Oil Spill/ERTV-*Sam Whitridge/Charles Bookman*
10:45 AM	**Committee member updates and any other business**
10:50 AM	**Adjourn MRC Meeting** **Convene LIO Meeting**
10:55 AM	**LIO Business/Updates- Katie Johnson/Jason Lim** • Puget Sound Partnership Updates • Vessel Impacts Action Plan Workshop • Mobile Pump out Summit • San Juan County Rep for PSP Boards (Ecosystem Coordination Board/Salmon Recovery Council)
11:30 AM	**Adjourn LIO Meeting** **Convene CAG Meeting**
11:30 AM	**CAG Business/Updates- Sam Whitridge** • Final Approval of 2026 SRFB Grant Round • Report on Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council forum on local permit and code enforcement and monitoring issues impacting salmon recovery • WA Salmon Coalition Annual Meeting in October
12:00 PM	**Adjourn CAG Meeting**

MRC, CAG and LIO Committee Members in Attendance: Paul Andersson, Charles Bookman, Kailey Genther, Rich Goodhart, Russel Guerry, Lovel Pratt, Mike Ramsey, Karin Roemers-Kleven, Beth Tate, Sandy Wyllie-Echeverria
Ex-officio, County support staff and members of the public: Gregg Dunphy, Marta Green, Sasha Horst, Katie Johnson, Brian Kirk, Kari Koski, Jennifer Lewis, Jason Lim, Kari McVeigh, Jessica Nye, Frances Robertson, Elaina Thompson, Sam Whitridge, Tillery Williams

9:02 AM **Convene MRC Meeting** *Adam Parrott*
Adam is sick today and Matt is on Vendovi out on the water, no Chair or Vice-chair so Matt will run the meeting.

9:03 AM **Public Comment**
Marta: I attended councilmember Paulsen's budget meeting a week ago Tuesday. It struck me as odd that County Council was promoting the budget ahead of the public hearing process rather than the County manager advocating for the budget they were proposing. My question was why was this position of deputy created to assist the County Manager at a salary of $198K when in the past the manager didn't need a deputy to assist. Jessica answered that in part. But it was clear in Justin's presentation the elimination of the Director of the ES department is not temporary, it's a permanent dismantling of the ES department. I was also disheartened by the recent op-ed in the Orcasonian where Kevin Ranker stated that spending was the real issue. Environmental Stewardship didn't cause this problem with the current budget. Our county manager's salary is higher than Governor Ferguson's, and on par with many much larger counties. I encourage all to come to the next meeting on Monday, there will be a hearing there. I hope many of you will speak. I'm concerned about the council's readiness to approve this budget without public process.

9:09 AM **Approve meeting agenda** *All*
Nothing to add, agenda approved.
Approve MRC September meeting minutes *MRC Members*
No edits, Sandy moves to approve the September minutes, Mike seconds, all in favor, minutes are approved.

9:10 AM **Discussion re: Canadian West Coast Oil Project and comments submitted by Dept of Ecology to the Canadian Major Projects Office** *Brian Kirk*
Sam: we're grateful to have Brian Kirk here today from Ecology to provide an overview of comments submitted from Ecology to the Canadian Major Projects office, I sent those around to MRC members prior to this meeting
Brian: the PM of Canada just announced this pipeline. I'm with the spill preparedness, prevention and response program. We have a series of inspectors and engineers who oversee state regulations aimed at preventing oil spills. We're concerned with the proposal for this new pipeline that would deliver crude oil to Roberts Bank onto ships. Brian shares PM Carney's announcement, the west coast oil pipeline has been listed as a project of national interest for Canada. That puts the pipeline on an accelerated timeline. Aiming to start construction in about a year. There are measures proposed to protect oceans and some things missing, like commitments to oil spill capacity
Frankie shares news article: https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/west-coast-pipeline-national-interest-9.7365037
Lovel shares PM's press release: https://www.pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2026/10/01/prime-minister-carney-lists-west-coast-oil-pipeline-now-known-pacific
Brian: in July 2026 Alberta submitted proposal for West Coast Oil Pipeline project on Roberts Bank, just two miles from Washington and capable of servicing largest tankers ever. The Major Projects Office in Canada is a relatively new agency. This is their first "Project of National Interest" under the new "Build Canada" act. Project timeline shows expected construction starting September 2027. There will be a public comment process and potential for

"interveners" to register with the CER (Canada Energy Regulator); Ecology has been an intervener in the past and may do so here. Brian recommends MRC get familiar with CER website and prepare to submit comments there. Construction will follow existing pipeline. Proposal calls for large crude carriers of unprecedented size, capable of carrying 100million gallons of oil. Tanker route would be prohibited from calling on Washington ports east of Port Angeles but they'll pass through State waters from Boundary Pass to Haro Strait. We'll absorb a good portion of oil spill risk. There may also be the possibility of ship-to-ship transfers at the dock. Port Angeles is west of the tanker exclusion line in Washington, so these large carriers could anchor in Washington waters there to take on fuel
DISCUSSION
Lovel: this is concerning. I wonder what governors' position is on this? I hope he'll oppose
Brian: we have talked to staff at the governor's office but I'm not aware of Ferguson's position
Lovel: who would be most appropriate staff in Governor's office to talk to about this? Amanda Fisher?
Brian: yes, she's Director of international relations, she'd be a good contact
Frankie: We are providing a tour to congressman Larsen on Tuesday for which we plan to include aerial flight and show proximity of islands to shipping lanes. What would you tell him if you were in that position?
Brian: point out the obvious risks, the narrowness of Boundary pass and Haro Strait, sharp turns the ships must make, ships of this size are unprecedented in these waters and calling on Canadian west coast ports. Now that this is in the permitting phase, CER required Transmountain to show capacity to respond to an oil spill of a certain size. They anticipate showing that they can respond to 40K metric tons spill, that's same size or larger than the Exxon Valdez spill. There could be a chance to make another ERTV part of that. I'd recommend stationing an emergency response vessel on Haro Strait or Boundary Pass where we have a gap in capacity. This creates an imbalance in the requirements between US and Canada in terms of what cargo capacity would require certain preventions
Charles: you haven't yet mentioned the word dilbit. Some oil sinks and doesn't float. We can talk about response capability for certain amounts, but do we have technology for it if it sinks? Will dilbit enter into the permitting
Brian: I understand diluted bitumen (tar sand oil) is anticipated to float for some time but will become likely to sink
Charles: I'd also like to mention that our County Council sent a letter to the governor on the need for an ERTV. Has it been responded to? Do you know the status of that? And on opposing the project instead of encouraging project managers to include the appropriate response(s)/take necessary measures? Where would you put the emphasis?
Brian: Organizations will need to decide where to position themselves. Some may find it's in their interest to go on record stating this project shouldn't happen. Could make specific recommendations.
Lovel: there's a permitted project already going ahead, the Roberts Bank Terminal 2 that would increase large tanker traffic so there will be two new terminals in that area. Can Canada make this project safe?
-brief discussion, how do governments and orgs assess risk? What level of risk is acceptable?
Brian: Permitting process should include technical evaluations, e.g. navigation safety assessment
Lovel: Washington has pointed to resources in Canada as available if there were to be a spill in our own waters. I wonder how this project has changed that with increased risk and if Washington will reconsider
Brian: It's a consideration of ships transiting even if not in port. Jenny Lewis from our spills program is also here.

9:43 AM **Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Updates** *Mike Ramsey*
I sent the meeting highlights via email and that includes all the links you may want to follow up on.
Island County MRC member led us on a site visit at Ebey's Landing, a bull kelp monitoring site. It's their longest-monitored site, you can find the data on their SoundIQ website.
Sea Grant crab team presented on the molt search program and early detection of invasive European Green crab.
Conference registration is open, please reach out to NWS with any questions.
There are opportunities on Oct 15th for new MRC members to learn about NWSC, link on events webpage.
There is a year-round invitation for MRC's to schedule time with the science advisory committee and schedule collaborative sessions to review projects, contact Dana Oster if interested.
And there's a workshop on effective Ecological Monitoring on November 6th in PT just prior to the conference.

Staff presented communications plan for 2026-2030, available on their website.
Email will be coming soon about guidance on the NWS Foundation new name and logo, Salish Sea Alliance.

9:50 AM **MRC Updates/Business**

• October 6th San Juan MRC meeting with U.S. Rep. Rick Larsen *Frances Robertson/Sam Whitridge*

Sam will be unable to attend, Frankie is taking the lead.
Frankie: we plan to take the congressman on a tour of the islands by air. We'll hit south end of Lopez to show some of at-risk backshore roads, Hunter Bay – a resilient eelgrass site and also popular boat anchorage. Heading up Lopez Sound to Shaw and Blind Bay, then up to Sucia via Eastsound (where green crabs have been detected). Sucia is one of most popular boating sites and declining eelgrass. Then fly down adjacent to Boundary Pass to show how connected we are to Canadian gulf islands, down to Westcott and Garrison to highlight eelgrass decline, green crab and popular anchorage, and then down West side marine sanctuary zones. Anyone can join for pre-flight meeting.

9:57 AM • MRC comments on proposed changes to the mooring buoy statute *Frances Robertson*

Joey was very helpful with this. This is one of the legislative actions we'll be tracking during 2027 sessions. We're grateful DNR is pushing for these changes. I shared the comment list with MRC members via email.
We were asked by DNR mooring buoy team to share the proposal with outer islands as much as possible

10:01 AM • NW Straits Commission Conference and San Juan MRC Collaborative Networking Activity *Sam Whitridge*

Deadline for registering is Oct 19, just a couple weeks away. So far Katie, Sam and Mike are registered. We can reimburse your travel (ferry & mileage & lodging). And on the MRC collaborative networking activity – each MRC can present on a priority area. We plan to focus on PFSS and whale warning flags packaged as easily replicable projects and community outreach programs that other MRC's could repackage and use

10:03 AM • MRC Annual Retreat Planning *Sam Whitridge*

Typically held on December meeting date, topics have rotated but we focus on work-planning and subcommittees. Usually 9am-2pm with lunch included, we'll see if FHL is available. Are there thoughts on what we want to focus on this year? The date would be December 3rd, conflicts? I'll touch base with members who aren't here today
Karin: the Retreat is important in this time, with what Canada is doing, I'd like a deeper dive into preparing for that
Charles: two comments/suggestions – I'll talk in my subcommittee report about an email conversation with Brendan Cowan regarding the deeper dive Karin just referred to in terms of Canadian pipeline. Maybe an hour or two with him on that would be good. And I've talked with TAG members – after projects have been implemented, there could be more feedback in terms of what makes a good project? some interaction with TAG members? How to best ensure we get good project proposals and have the most effective process
Sam: I talked to Tina about a presentation, could be in December. We can include a salmon-recovery focus session
Mike: enforcement and mooring buoys, protecting our resources on the water. Unpermitted actions. I'd like to hear from someone in charge of enforcement. Voluntary compliance isn't working

10:10 AM • Update/Discussion re: MRC Youth Membership *Sam Whitridge/Katie Johnson*

Katie: it was a very positive experience with past youth members. The original idea was to have a two-year term, but we only had seniors apply and now they're at college. Do we want to rethink or expand the position?
SWE: having an interview process worked well. We could circulate the announcements through FHL instructors and all the high schools, and maybe ask for suggestions from past participants Flora and Lola
Kailey: when we set up the bylaws, we already extended it to young adults. I think it's open up to age 24 or 25.
Katie: having a broader age range aligns more with how the Climate and Sustainability committee does it too
Sandy: it would be great to get feedback from Flora and Lola before retreat in December

ACTION: Katie will reach out to them and plan to present at December meeting

10:17 AM • Discussion re: San Juan County designated seat on the San Juan MRC *Sam Whitridge*
MRC operating resolution says the Director of the ES will have a seat on the MRC and need a new representative from MRC to Council. We're allowed up to 15 positions on the MRC and this spot is empty.
Charles: the previous person was the executive level director who ES staff reported to. You will have a new person to report to when the budget is complete, I think that would be the natural person to occupy that seat
ACTION: let's plan to discuss this again before end of year when more MRC members are present.
Kailey: regarding those positions, can we vote as the MRC on who we want to represent us?
Katie: I think it's important that whoever is in that role supervising ES has a good base of understanding the MRC
Marta: there aren't different options for where the ES staff will report to; they'll support to the Parks department which is all about recreation in a small area. The budget proposes that ES staff will report to Parks.
ACTION: we'll circle back to this at November or December meeting

10:23 AM • MRC Subcommittee Updates
o Outreach & Education *Katie Johnson*
Volunteer hour spreadsheet was sent out by Katie; that's a required deliverable by our grant.
ACTION: Please submit volunteer hours to Katie
Also, we're working with WDFW to bring a kelp workshop to the SJ's on November 14th at the Grange. It's about human dimensions i.e. how humans interact with kelp. It should be fun!

10:25 AM o Plastic Free Salish Sea *Karin Roemers-Kleven/Katie Johnson*
Great Islands Clean Up (GICU) last weekend - Orcas had 69 people! SJI had 48. We worked with humpback hauler to do some outer-islands pick-ups. Got some large items from there, great to connect with those folks.

10:27 AM o Seagrass Protection *Olivia Graham/Katie Johnson*
Sandy: REU wrapped up her project on Shaw, report coming later this month, I'll circulate to MRC members.
Frankie: data collection complete for Eelgrass Impact HSIL. We're planning two workshops in March – transboundary eelgrass and eelgrass stressors. And then right after that will be the Marine Managers' workshop. We hope to talk more about that at retreat in December.

10:29 AM o Derelict Vessel Prevention *Adam Parrott/Kari Koski*
Kari: we just put together a proposal to use Humpback Hauling and outer island contacts to collect more small boats and dovetail that with the Spring GICU, and we'll also need a lot of volunteers
Using the NWStraits funding, Uwilla was selected and DNR will be removing it. Weather is starting to move so we'll be getting out on patrols and tagging some vessels for removal. We're targeting areas around Friday Harbor.

10:32 AM o Oil Spill/ERTV *Sam Whitridge/Charles Bookman*
The County Council's public letter, based on their letter to Ferguson, has appeared in some local publications. We heard the news about the new Canadian pipeline project and that Ecology has submitted a formal opposition letter. Friends also sent an opposition letter. Brendan Cowan couldn't be here today, but he thinks SJC and Islands Trust need to continue working together closely and with Tribes/First Nations. He suggests recasting our ask for ERTV in Sidney or the nearest practical location, equivalent to the KJ Gardner (Canadian Emergency Response Vessel). Need to find out more about the capacity of that boat if we plan to narrow our focus. He also stressed that tugs be tasked with responding to any vessel in distress, not just tankers (that's how the Neah Bay tug works).
I emailed Frankie to suggest mentioning 'dilbit' for the tour with Larsen to. The Coast Guard is in the best position to push State on technology to respond to that and Larsen is in a good position to push the Coast Guard

10:35 AM **Committee member updates and any other business** *None*

10:36 AM **Adjourn MRC Meeting**

11:54 AM **Convene CAG Meeting**

11:54 AM **CAG Business/Updates** *Sam Whitridge*

• Final Approval of 2026 SRFB Grant Round

SRFB met a couple of weeks ago and approved both projects. Friends of San Juans' project was approved for just shy of $240K and funds should be available soon. We partially funded the Land Bank project at just over $900K which all comes from PSAR funding which won't be available until July 2027. We'll start on next grant round soon.

10:56 AM • Report on Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council forum on local permit and code enforcement and monitoring issues impacting salmon recovery

Met in Coupeville, Jane Fuller was there. A forum was held at the meeting on improving local code enforcement and monitoring. The SRC has been tasked with holding this forum and then coming forward with recommendations based on the discussions held. Permit enforcement and compliance in shoreline environment. It was an interesting discussion. Anyone can watch the recording of that, September 24th Salmon Recovery Council meeting. Plan to bring forth some of the recommendations that came from that at next meeting in November.

10:58 AM • WA Salmon Coalition Annual Meeting in October

Regionally Sam will attend the WA Salmon Coalition annual meeting in Anacortes (same day as Larsen's visit). Statewide coalition of salmon recovery lead entities who meet quarterly to discuss challenges, policy and legislative issues, etc. It'll be helpful to get a picture of where we stand from SRFB about funding as we go into 2027 legislative session. Sam will report about that at next meeting

11:00 AM **Adjourn CAG Meeting**