



SAN JUAN COUNTY
Marine Resources
Committee



Marine Advisory Committees
MRC-CAG-LIO
Meeting Agenda

Thursday, September 5th, 2024
9:00 AM – 12:00 PM
In-Person at San Juan Island Grange
152 First St N, Friday Harbor, WA 98250

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Phone conference ID: 807 980 994#

9:00 AM	Convene MRC Meeting – Adam Parrott
9:05 AM	Public Comment
9:10 AM	Review meeting agenda – All Approve MRC August meeting minutes – MRC Members
9:15 AM	NWSC August Meeting Report to the MRC– Sam Whitridge
9:20 AM	MRC Introduction to new San Juan County Manager- Jessica Hudson
9:25 AM	Presentation: Update on San Juan Islands Conservation District Eelgrass Restoration Project- Paul Andersson
9:50 AM	MRC Updates/Business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report on MRC Intern Position- <i>Roan Ontjes-Degroot</i> • Marine Capital Improvement Plan Approval- <i>Kendra Smith</i> • Update on Vessel Surveys- <i>Frances Robertson</i> • Northwest Straits Initiative Conference (Nov 15-16 in Everett)- <i>Sam Whitridge</i> • MRC Vice Chair Position- <i>Sam Whitridge</i> • Open Public Meetings Act Training (OPMA), September 16th- <i>Sam Whitridge</i> • WA Initiative-2117, Climate Commitment Act Repeal- <i>Sam Whitridge/Lovel Pratt</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OPALCO’s planned tidal project off the east side of Blakely Island- <i>Karin Roemers-Kleven</i> • Review of MRC procedures for making and approving motions- <i>Matt Arata</i> • Update on ERTV Outreach Efforts- <i>Sam Whitridge</i> • MRC subcommittee updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Outreach & Education- <i>Katie Johnson</i> ○ Eelgrass Protection- <i>Katie Johnson</i> ○ Derelict Vessel Prevention- <i>Adam Parrott</i> ○ Oil Spill Prevention and Response Preparedness- <i>Lovel Pratt</i> ○ Plastic Free Salish Sea- <i>Karin Roemers-Kleven</i> ○ Other subcommittee updates
10:45 AM	Committee member updates and any other business
10:50 AM	Adjourn MRC Meeting Convene CAG Meeting
10:50 AM	CAG Meeting – <i>Sam Whitridge</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Report on 2024 Salmon Recovery Grant Round • Upcoming September Salmon Recovery Funding Board Meeting • Update on Friends of the San Juans’ Neck Point Project (Shaw Island)
11:10 AM	Adjourn CAG Meeting/Convene LIO Meeting
11:10 AM	LIO Updates/Business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PSP Updates- <i>Jason Lim</i> • Onsite Sewage System (OSS) Action Plan Implementation Next Steps- <i>Sam Whitridge</i> • Local Forum evaluation and feedback- <i>Sam Whitridge</i> • Update on Year 3 of LIO agreement- <i>Sam Whitridge</i>
12:00 PM	Adjourn LIO Meeting

MRC, CAG and LIO Committee Members in Attendance: Matt Arata, Kailey Genther, Patti Gobin, Brian Goodremont, Olivia Graham, Adam Parrott, Lovel Pratt, Mike Ramsey, Karin Roemers-Kleven, Sandy Wyllie-Echeverria

Ex-officio, County support staff and members of the public: Caitlyn Blair, Kate Combs, Sydney Cook, Tyler Davis, Gregg Dunphy, Jessica Hudson, Jason Lim, Mitch McCloskey, Roan Ontjes-DeGroot, Frances Robertson, Kendra Smith, Heather Spore, Kim Sundberg, Tina Whitman, Sam Whitridge, Cindy Wolf

9:10 AM **Convene MRC meeting** *Adam Parrott*

9:10 AM **Public Comment** *none*

9:10 AM **Review meeting agenda, Approve MRC August meeting minutes** *MRC members*
 Everyone approves the meeting agenda. Lovel submitted some edits for more accurate wording in the minutes.
 MOTION: Lovel moves to approve the August minutes as amended, Sandy seconds. All approve. Minutes approved.

9:12 AM **MRC Introduction to new San Juan County Manager** *Jessica Hudson*
 Jessica introduces herself and talks briefly about her work history in local government. MRC members and other meeting attendants introduce themselves around the room.

9:18 AM **NWSC Meeting Report to the MRC** *Sam Whitridge*
 Caitlyn introduces herself and talks about the annual NWSC conference. Working now on the agenda based on survey from MRC members. November 15-16 at the Delta Hotel in Everett. Discusses details of keynote and other speakers. Please email Caitlyn with any questions. Sam can help with travel reimbursements

9:22 AM **Presentation: Update on SJI Conservation District Eelgrass Restoration Project** *Mitch McCloskey*
 Mitch presenting in place of Paul Andersson. Mitch introduces the concept, collecting seeds avoids destruction of the donor meadow as well as other benefits like genetic diversity. Steps for restoration success: adaptive management, regularly assessing implemented practices – evaluate and adapt. Address problems systematically.

1. Project Site Identification, potential planting sites and harvest sites
2. Project Site Assessment, CD doesn't have resources for scientific diving. But a new HSIL just approved for eelgrass meadow health assessments. Involves sensors monitoring conditions in eelgrass meadows
3. Final step is project site evaluation, workbook for site evaluation, collect data systematically

This year had the opportunity to use student volunteers from the Marine Subtidal Ecology (MSE) course at FHL, that and field collection at Padilla Bay meant a big bump in seed volume collected relative to last four years 2020-2023.

We also want to know the impact on the meadows we're collecting from. During the MSE we assessed subtidal harvest techniques for collection. We've also been expanding relationship with Padilla Bay, ran a pilot study to build "harvest best practices" – plan to continue for the next three years with Sylvia Yang. Padilla Bay is the largest eelgrass meadow in the lower 48 states, and with a similar genetic signature to eelgrass in the islands.

Eelgrass Cultivation System (funded in part by SRFB grant) at FHL to maintain flowering eelgrass heads.

Viable Seed inventory – testing seeds, counting seeds by weight, etc. Planting planned next spring, injecting seeds SRFB objectives – to expand collection sites (Padilla Bay, plus sites in SJI's – Jackson Beach and Shaw County Park)

-expanded eelgrass cultivation system, as well as analysis and techniques

-community involvement with future scientists, hope to continue involving students from FHL and maybe also YCC

-and finally, adaptive management to maintain seed bank. Develop site selection workbook etc.

Looking forward: continued partnership with FHL, WDFW, and WDNR. Thanks to collaborators and funding sources

QUESTIONS

Kendra: how are you assessing study locations relative to physical disturbance?

Mitch: the goal is to look at all environmental variables, long term-monitoring data from DNR and Friends of SJs.

Kendra: needs to be conservation measure i.e. publicly owned or blocked so not destroyed by anchoring. Should look at boating traffic for best success. And work with partners like DNR to cordon off areas as no-anchor zones

Frankie: We are also partners on that HSIL to look at physical disturbance and impacts from crab pots and vessels. You should mention our vessel impact work and involvement in those efforts, boater education and outreach for eelgrass. Were there no restoration/monitoring efforts as part of SRFB?

Mitch: we didn't get full approval for planting until just a few weeks ago due to cultural resource issues.

Frankie: at least one of those sites has been slated for restoration efforts so we should talk about timing

Mitch: part of the workbook effort is to facilitate conversations; we don't need to seed at all of these sites this year.

Kendra: we do have anchor out buoys in some locations and DNR leases, if those sites align you may want to look at them first because they have a protection standard. As does the Land Bank with a number of shoreline properties.

Mitch: the workbook can facilitate input from experts, rank elements in importance – is it more important that there's an anchor-out area or that there's an historic meadow?

Adam: how are you going to survey for those expert opinions?

Mitch: we've been targeting specific individuals, doing literature review, build relationships with scientists

Tina: kudos to everyone for all the momentum around this habitat – Sandy, Olivia, Drew, etc. We've been re-mapping eelgrass county-wide. Olivia has a new paper out on eelgrass disease in the SJI's.

ACTION: can we get a link out to Olivia's paper?

It's exciting to have all these data and the MRC in role as CAG is helping to facilitate this work. But we have an eelgrass crisis in the islands. Now from county-wide data we're understanding that deeper beds are more resilient and we're losing the upper beds. You said that's informing the seed collection but is it also informing the planting for best chances of success? I think depth will be a critical factor

Mitch: we've been largely working at the seed collection part of the process but plan to work on next steps Jeff and Wendel coming to the islands soon. Plan to get everyone in the room to talk

Tina: we also plan to have a meeting

Olivia: can you remind me when Jackson Beach restoration will occur?

Frankie: we're putting in for remaining permits now, likely work for next September 2025.

Kendra: there's still some discussion with Public Works about the possibility of a barge landing there. We want to make sure that doesn't happen in an eelgrass area but that is a major barge location for the County

Olivia: the team hopes to put out a sensor in the eelgrass meadow there in the next month or so

ACTION: Olivia, Mitch, and Kendra will connect about this offline

9:59 AM **MRC Updates/Business**

- OPALCO's planned tidal project off the east side of Blakely Island

Karin Roemers-Kleven

Karin: OPALCO has announced they're planning a wave energy project, a floating device with turbines. Must be somewhere with a lot of current. They identified several areas, like Cattle Pass, but settled on Blakely. It would be great to have someone from OPALCO talk about this to us

Frankie: we have several representatives from Tribes here (Gregg, Heather, Patti), a lot of interest in this. Tidal can be extremely expensive, early days in terms of engineering. Some objections from Tribes over treaty access

Heather: I'm the environmental policy manager for Swinomish, my colleague Sydney Cook is here. We recently had a call with OPALCO and their consultants. They've been communicative but light on details. As Frankie mentioned, the Tribes have concerns about impacts to treaty fishing, and on mammals and on resources. The preliminary designs for tidal turbine and how they intend to anchor it to the sea floor has a lot of potential for entanglement

with marine mammals and fishing gear, could obstruct access. We plan a follow up call in October, we expect additional materials, when they apply for permits and EIS there'll be additional opportunities to engage Level: Friends of SJ's has also had preliminary talks with OPALCO. MRC could encourage Council to ask OPALCO to have a completely transparent process. We haven't received all available information. There may be factors they didn't consider in choosing this site in terms of marine resource issues that we could inform them about.

Adam: for transparency, are you suggesting we send a letter as an MRC?

Level: I think we can make the recommendation to the County Council and it's up to them how to encourage OPALCO ways to improve the process. I appreciate the County's efforts

Sandy: could you circulate the WSU study on salmon? It would be good to see the structure they used

ACTION: Level will share the link

Patti: It's good practice to contact every single Tribe that has treaty rights there. Thank you, Swinomish, for the work you're doing. Before they get too far down the road better to get into consultation. We need to protect the salmon, the eelgrass, everything on the bottom of the Salish Sea. Tulalip receives billions of consultation letters and by the time we get to all of them it may be too late. We're just beginning eelgrass restoration efforts on our reservation; we want to be involved in this. In general, why not invite all the Tribes to see what this is about.

Heather: thank you, Patti. When OPALCO reached out to Swinomish I encouraged them to reach out to other Tribes. My first recommendation was to reach out to NW Indian Fish commission to get contacts for other Tribes. Sounds like we need to push them a little harder on that, an all-tribal presentation is a great idea – I wonder if the MRC could work with NWIFC on that. Tribal consultation needs to be early, often, and continuous

Olivia: can anyone bring me up to speed on this initiative? OPALCO is trying to move ahead – is it happening?

Frankie: there have been two public meetings so far. One six months ago and one last week. Not much movement. They've received funding to explore and do studies with that site in mind. that may be as far as they get

Tina: they're getting grant funding for various stages. They got an early scoping grant that helped them select the site and the technology. Now a new grant for the next phase. But the economics don't pencil out exactly for how many turbines they would need. They are planning to apply next April for a permit to put it in. It'll be a long process, but I agree that we can encourage more transparency. They're pursuing it but don't have a permit yet

Cindy: I'm very glad to see Tribal partners at the table. When OPALCO first called about this project I said they needed to hire a Tribal consultant. I'm disappointed there hasn't been more communication.

Heather: Swinomish staff reviewed a Corps of Engineers permit request to deploy a buoy offshore in this location to collect data so they continue to investigate this area.

10:24 AM • Review of MRC procedures for making and approving motions

Matt Arata

The Chair has a big role in handling motions and we have a new chair, seems like a good time to review. Parliamentary procedure = accepted rules and ethics, intended to protect everyone. Robert's Rules of Order, first published in 1876. The chair refers to itself in third person. The main motion is how business is brought before the meeting, "I move that" or "I move to". After a member seconds a motion, chair says "it has been moved, any discussion?", "... we shall proceed to vote". And the chair should recognize the person who made the motion.

10:36 AM **MRC Updates/Business**

• Report on MRC Intern Position

Roan Ontjes-Degroot

For the NW Straits, I visited five sites among Lopez and Orcas where there are eelgrass buoys. So far, I've done 65 site visits. I also compiled all SJC data into a separate spreadsheet to make it easier to see. One interesting thing I saw looking at the different vessels is that locals used mooring buoys more.

Frankie: when recording boats, did you also record the ones on mooring buoys?

Roan: I asked NW Straits and they asked me to count the ones that were on anchor; I also counted the ones that were on mooring buoys but included those in the notes. They can be edited to add those in

Olivia: how often did you see boats anchored and mooring balls empty?

Roan: where there were only a few buoys they are generally all in use. For places with more buoys not always

Frankie: we've heard from boaters that they're concerned about the state of mooring buoys at Watmough

Kendra: we've had no dedicated funding or strategy for this

Tina: Friends of the San Juans has been paying for some of it

ACTION: we should get together and talk about these buoys

Roan: I spent about 16 hours tabling for outreach and handed out over 80 flags. The majority of people I talked to on Orcas wanted flags. More organizations need to hit Orcas, Lopez, and Shaw. I also did the Trashin' Fashion show – Katie Johnson suggested designing an outfit using plastic bags. I created a vest and shorts with fused plastic from mesh produce bags. I took a lot of lessons and seeing how these meetings run and what projects you're doing.

Frankie: we're planning to use Roan's help on a few more things, satellite images that can collect

10:49 AM • Northwest Straits Initiative Conference (Nov 15-16 in Everett)

Sam Whitridge

We already covered this, contact me for help with hotel booking etc.

10:49 AM • Open Public Meetings Act Training (OPMA), September 16th

Sam Whitridge

Upcoming requirement for everyone to take OPMA training. Options;

- at September 16 Council meeting you can attend in person or virtually to take care of the requirement,

- or each member can watch the video on their own and then complete a form afterwards for verification,

- or we could reserve time during the next MRC meeting, every member must complete by the end of 2024

Sam: I'll be sending out reminders about this. You can also watch the recording of the 9/16 meeting

Kailey: how long does it take? - likely an hour or less

10:53 AM • MRC Vice Chair Position

Sam Whitridge

Adam was approved as chair last month, we approved Beth Tate but she followed up to say she has no capacity

Karin is willing and able and interested in being vice-chair for another year.

MOTION: Lovel moves to approve Karin as our vice chair. Sandy seconds. Chair calls the vote, all in favor. So moved.

10:55 AM • WA Initiative-2117, Climate Commitment Act Repeal

Sam Whitridge/Lovel Pratt

This initiative would do away with the climate commitment act that supports many projects, including the riparian funding just approved. Kendra provides the details for millions of dollars that have been spent or committed to the County in connection with this Act. We've drafted a letter to the County to specifically point out all these benefits.

MOTION: Lovel moves to request staff draft a letter to County Council to express the importance of climate commitment act to our work, both in funding and reduction to carbon emissions highlight how this act funds projects in the County. Sandy seconds. The Chair calls the vote, all in favor, the motion passes

Tina: this act is meant to be economic incentive for companies, it's a cap-and-trade project for our state

11:02 AM • Update on ERTV Outreach Efforts

Sam Whitridge

Inslee has taken an increased interest in this topic, Lovel had a conversation with him about it

Lovel: he came for a boat trip with Friends. Initial focus on climate commitment act on eelgrass and kelp protection. But we talked about vessel-related issues and concerns. It was amazing to me that he said, 'what about that study that said an ERTV would only have a 2% effectiveness rate' and I was able to respond. He said, even if effectiveness rate was low, we still need to do more to prevent oil spills. That study has been the bane of our existence, really hasn't communicated well the need for an ERTV and that's filtered through to the Governor's office

Kendra: Brian Kirk has been called in, we have a scheduled meeting with them for the 16th. We want to put aside the existing report and ask them to just do a one-sheet that talks about the effectiveness to this region if you parked this at Sydney and benefit to all regional waterways (Haro Strait, Boundary Pass, etc.)

11:07 AM • CIP

Kendra Smith

These are projects funded by SRFB and other sources – Kendra runs through projects (Weeks Way, Jackson Beach, Orcas Landing interpretative, etc.). The County Mooring Buoy system is in Capital Planning, addressing some infrastructure needs. Council has already approved the grants we've gone after for these, but I've bundled these together and submitted similar plans for clean water utility and solid waste utility.

MOTION: Kailey moves to submit this CIP to county council. Mike seconds. No further discussion, Chair calls the vote. All approve, the motion passes.

Kendra: thank you, let us know about any additional projects coming forward.

11:10 AM • vessel survey

Frances Robertson

We've flown six survey days since Memorial Day. Still waiting for contract amendment and then final survey day on the 14th. Two line transects each survey day, in the morning and afternoon. Collect data on every vessel or group of vessels. Then we do targeted flights. Photographs as back up for visual count. Image of Sucia with over 40 vessels in Shallow Bay tells a thousand words. Working with Jeff Gaeckle to discuss consequences for eelgrass. Potential to use satellite imagery. As we've done these counts, also took counts from marine traffic on AIS –many boats are on anchor in real life but not on AIS. We plan to show some habitat overlays – probably ready by Jan or Feb.

Kailey: significant uptick in boats over this past weekend?

Frankie: there's been an increase over the season, August 3 there were 200 boats at Sucia, July 20 there were too many to count. During good weather, peak summer/good weather

Olivia: are there any other counties that limit the number of boats that can anchor out?

Frankie: Jefferson has an anchor out zone they deploy each season, they do regular counts. We put one in at Odlin which was a requirement of the aquatic lease because there's a dock there.

Tina: we had a number of anchor-out buoys for herring spawning sites, never made it through permitting with that. It's too much stuff in the water. Pivoting to mark in navigational. And issues of whether they're public or private

11:19 AM • MRC Subcommittee updates:

o Derelict Vessel Prevention

Adam Parrott

We're planning a presentation at NW Straits commission conference, Kari will discuss next time

o Plastic Free Salish Sea

Karin Roemers-Kleven

Frankie: save the date for Great Islands Clean up (GICU), Sept. 21.

Adam: you should contact port to make sure you can drop off trash with them

o Eelgrass Protection

Sandy: planning to build a 'geo fence' to show where eelgrass is, an app

And, Kailey and I continue to work on the youth member, more to report in October

11:22 AM **Adjourn MRC meeting, Convene CAG meeting** Adam moves to adjourn, Kailey seconds

11:22 AM **CAG Agenda**

• Update on Friends of the San Juans' Neck Point Project (Shaw Island)

Tina: Friends of SJ's are working on a shoreline armor removal restoration on Shaw. It's fully permitted. Engineer cost estimates (which were written several years ago) have changed since grant approval. Need to do shoreline

work after salmon migration but while there are still good daytime tides – if we postpone it means a whole year because we need to target this specific window of time. Reopening project to bids so that affects timing.

11:24 AM • Final Report on 2024 Salmon Recovery Grant Round

Now it's a slower time of year for SRFB but Sam reviews what we approved for funding in the grant round that just wrapped. A lot of moving parts with various panels to put together final funding amounts

• Upcoming September Salmon Recovery Funding Board Meeting

This is final approval on September 25th. Then contracts with project sponsors (PSAR funds not until next summer). Thank you Sam! Another round coming up in a few months

11:28 AM **Adjourn CAG meeting**