



SAN JUAN COUNTY
Marine Resources
Committee



Marine Advisory Committees
MRC-CAG-LIO
Meeting Agenda

Thursday, January 9th, 2025
9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Microsoft Teams

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 224 419 553 14

Passcode: vm2pN6hV

Or call in (audio only)

Dial in by phone

[+1 360-726-3293,,422838037#](#) United States, Vancouver

Phone conference ID: 422 838 037#

While this is a virtual meeting, a public meeting place is available at the San Juan Island Grange at 152 1st St. N in Friday Harbor for those without mobile phone or internet access.

9:00 AM	Convene MRC Meeting – Adam Parrott
9:05 AM	Public Comment
9:10 AM	Approve meeting agenda – All Approve MRC December Retreat meeting minutes – MRC Members
9:15 AM	NWSC Meeting Report to the MRC- Christina Koons <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on Northwest Straits Initiative Definition- <i>Sasha Horst/Lucas Hart</i>
9:25 AM	MRC Updates/Business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Discussion- <i>Karin Roemers-Kleven</i> • MRC Youth Member Proposal Next Steps- <i>Sandy Wyllie-Echeverria</i> • Review/Approval of MRC Subcommittees and Work Plan from Retreat- <i>Sam Whitridge</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Revisit Tribal Partnerships Subcommittee discussion- <i>All</i> • San Juan County Representatives on Local/Regional Boards- <i>Sam Whitridge</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Stewardship Network ○ Salmon Recovery Council ○ Ecosystem Coordination Board • Planning for MRC Projects for 2025-2027- <i>Sam Whitridge</i> • Report on MRC Member Interviews- <i>Sam Whitridge</i> • Update on J35 (Tahlequah)- <i>Frances Robertson</i> • New Vessel Distance Regulations for SRKW- <i>Frances Robertson</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kelp exhibit at SJI Museum of Art- <i>Christina Koons</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> ○ Oil Spill/ERTV-<i>Sam Whitridge</i> • Other subcommittee updates
10:15 AM	Presentation: OPALCO Tidal Generation Project- <i>Krista Bouchey, OPALCO</i>
10:45 AM	Committee member updates and any other business
10:50 AM	Adjourn MRC Meeting Convene LIO Meeting
10:50 AM	LIO Agenda –<i>Sam Whitridge</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EPA Funding Model Overview and Discussion- <i>Katie Johnson</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ LIO Comment Letter on EPA Funding Model • Planning for February LIO Meeting EPA Funding Model Discussion- <i>Katie Johnson</i> • Revisit San Juan LIO Structure and Executive Committee- <i>Katie Johnson/Sam Whitridge</i>
11:30 AM	Adjourn LIO Meeting Convene CAG Meeting
11:30 AM	CAG Updates/Business- <i>Sam Whitridge</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning/Overview of 2025 Salmon Recovery Grant Round • Cancellation of 2025 Salmon Recovery Conference
12:00 PM	Adjourn CAG Meeting

MRC, CAG and LIO Committee Members in Attendance: Paul Andersson, Matt Arata, David Checkley, Kailey Genter, Patti Gobin, Olivia Graham, Christina Koons, Adam Parrott, Lovel Pratt, Mike Ramsey, Karin Roemers-Kleven, Craig Smith, Beth Tate, Sandy Wyllie-Echeverria

Ex-officio, County support staff and members of the public: Krista Bouchey, Stacy Bumback, Audrey Coyne, Cameron Fisher, Marta Green, Russel Guerry, Lucas Hart, Katie Johnson, Justin Klure, Kari Koski, Jason Lim, Nicole Lobodzinski, Laura Pitts, Frances Robertson, Kendra Smith, Sam Whitridge

9:03 AM **Convene MRC meeting** *Adam Parrott*

9:03 AM **Public Comment** *none*

9:04 AM **Approve meeting agenda, Approve MRC December retreat minutes** *MRC members*

Dave moves to approve the agenda, Olivia seconds. No additions or edits. The agenda is approved
Sandy points out an error in the Retreat Minutes under Tribal partnerships; rather than a youth group, there is a separate nonprofit organization, the Coast Salish Youth Coalition. With that correction, Dave moves to approve the Retreat Minutes. Christina seconds. All in favor, the December Retreat meeting minutes are approved

9:07 AM **NWSC Meeting Report to the MRC** *Christina Koons*

Lucas: The reauthorization didn't pass. Senator Murray is evaluating next steps for the current congress. We have made some progress – got it through the commerce committee.

Christina: MRC conference was a success and a joy, glad that staff could attend, hope more can attend next year.

Dave: what are the implications of the reauthorization not passing?

Lucas: status quo. We have champions like Senator Murray who will continue to ensure we have what's needed for operations. This is about elevating status to a federal program. We secured ongoing programmatic funding

• Update on NW Straits Initiative Definition *Lucas Hart*

In September, NW Straits Retreat attended by the Commission and Foundation, inclusive of MRC reps and staff. Discussed definition together with consultants. There was confusion about what the Initiative is, who it comprises and what it does. Agreed on a definition proposed at the retreat: "The Northwest Straits Initiative is a community-led collaboration dedicated to protecting and restoring the marine environment of northwest Washington. It is composed of the NW Straits Commission and seven locally based Marine Resources Committees. Together they identify and address priority NW Straits marine conservation issues." The key is the second sentence about the structural element. Next discussion on Whidbey Island Jan 31st. Commission created the Foundation as a non-profit. But they became separate, and now Foundation has their own board. We're updating the definition to reflect the current structure. Funding to MRC's from the Commission won't change. We can still have partnerships and contracts, but defining the decision-making body of the Initiative as comprised of the Commission and MRC's.

9:21 AM **MRC Updates/Business**

• Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Discussion

Karin Roemers-Kleven

We've been provided with resources. Ready to start meeting as subcommittee to develop DEI concepts within our MRC, in our policy and in our recruiting practices. We'll discuss outreach, meeting announce-

ments –perhaps minutes should be translated. Please send us any ideas you have! Christina, Olivia, Sandy are interested in joining

9:25 AM • MRC Youth Member Proposal Next Steps *Sandy Wyllie-Echeverria, Kailey Genther*
Sam & Katie will bring this to the MRC and then to Council. We'd like you to review and send us back comments.

Sam: last week sent out with meeting packet the concept of the youth membership idea. Seeking MRC support

Kendra: we can share the intention with Council; to make it stick we should open the committee membership and that's done by resolution. I'll work on that with Sam and Katie. This is the second committee with a youth member

MOTION: add two youth members on MRC. Lovel seconds. All in favor. Intent is approved, wording to be refined

9:33 AM • Review/Approval of MRC Subcommittees and Work Plan from Retreat *Sam Whitridge*
Approve both the subcommittee list and the workplan (due as deliverables to NWSC). Sam sent these out
Sandy: confirm Jeff Dyer is still interested in serving on subcommittees as an interested non-member. Jeff was an invaluable member of the oil spill prevention and spill response preparedness subcommittee
ACTION: Sam will send Jeff the table of listing MRC subcommittees to gauge his interest

o Revisit Tribal Partnerships Subcommittee discussion

Frankie: we sent letters to all 14 tribes; the letter introduced that SJC is interested in more formal engagement in consultation policies. Seeking opportunity to create those policies with each individual tribe so we can tailor it to each of their wishes. We've had one response from Lower Elwha Cle Elum Tribe; I'll send out a reminder soon. I put the question back to the MRC as to interest and what MRC hopes to get out of a Tribal engagement subcommittee. Who would lead? What would it bring at this point, given that we don't know yet what the different tribes want.

Who's interested? Sandy, Matt, Kailey, Mike R., Beth, Patti, Lovel, Olivia (penciled in).

Patti: This is a great idea but doesn't necessarily need to be a subcommittee. Tribes will be at the table if they want to be, it's essential that they're here. This is our homeland, there's a Treaty with the USA and needs to be inclusive. We can work together or fight in court. The indigenous people are special to this land so how to engage more tribes? I haven't been as engaged lately, but MRC is important to me. It was so important to Terry Williams. If you send the invitation out to all tribes – you may need to call them all

Frankie: aim to have as many weighing in on decisions. Want to build more formal consultation frameworks, find specific contacts and what they want to be involved in. One barrier is within the framework of MRC membership

Patti: in the Tulalip, the invitation came to the Chair. But then how to get them to the table in a busy world? Maybe the MRC hosts a coffee or a lunch in the SJI's, some kind of open house- what is the MRC? An overview. Need to make them feel welcome and aware of what it really is. Our lifeways in the islands are unique. Getting people to the table is the hard part. Need to make them aware of what's happening with marine resources. Frankie, if you need help of who to contact let me know and we can make that list. You need to start calling

9:54 AM • **San Juan County Representatives on Local/Regional Boards** *Sam Whitridge*

With respect to the following three groups:

o Stewardship Network of the San Juans – Phil Green was our rep consistently attending monthly meetings and reporting back. Meetings have an in-person option at the Parks building but also virtual via teams. Ten or

so people attend. Includes, Friends of San Juans, Conservation District, Whale Museum, Coast Salish Youth Coalition, etc.

Karin may be interested depending on time commitments. <https://www.stewardshipsanjuans.org/>

o Salmon Recovery Council and Ecosystem Coordination Board

Sam: Cindy Wolf was our rep for both of these and Sam was the alternate. We have two new Council members

Kendra: committee assignments will be made during their retreat. Jane Fuller has expressed interest in the MRC

Sam: the rep doesn't need to be a council person, that's just historic – it was Jamie Stephens then Cindy. I can continue to be the alternate

Karin: can we table this until we have more structure in the council?

Yes

10:01 AM • Planning for MRC Projects for 2025-2027

Sam Whitridge

Coming up on another biennium and NW Straits Commission grant. There will be an RFP released later this month. We'll need to submit our project list for the next biennium. Think about what projects we want on the table. Some core projects like PFSS (Plastic Free Salish Sea) and DV (Derelict Vessels). Amount per project depends on number of projects, about \$25K. Now we're at the stage of general ideas, we'll discuss and refine budgets, we have until May.

Kendra: caution the group that there are several ongoing projects, must ensure those can either continue or wrap up before moving onto the next. And that there's alignment with the MSA, not expanding too much. With new federal government resources may get tighter so need to be cautious about expansion, stay on topic and on-core.

10:07 AM • Update on MRC Member Interviews

Sam Whitridge

Karin, Adam, Katie and I conducted interviews yesterday. We interviewed three candidates, all strong. We're excited about the applicants. *(more on this below at end of the meeting)*

10:08 AM • Update on J35

Frances Robertson

J35 gave birth around Christmas and by New Years her baby was dead. It's happening again, she's still carrying her calf after a week. The new regulation is now 1000 yds from whales, this will be pushed out at the boat show later this winter and we can use volunteers there. Aiming to shift attitudes and behavior around whales in the Salish sea.

Adam: is this law for transients as well as residents?

Frankie: they remain 200 yds as per federal regulations. But if you can't tell, you need to treat them all like residents. That's the message for rec boaters. Commercial whale watch boats can distinguish between ecotypes.

-more details about the timing and verified sightings by Soundwatch, NOAA etc.

We can't determine cause of death without examining the calf; that won't happen unless J35 releases it

Karin: and we also have Wild Orca out there looking for scat samples

10:15 AM Presentation: OPALCO Tidal Generation Project

Krista Bouchey

Introducing the team – Russel Guerry is the manager of engineering and operations, manager for this project
Justin Klure – I'm providing project management support.

Stacy Bumback – I'm a consultant helping with coordination with Tribal nations and cultural resource work

Cameron Fisher – I'm with 48 north solutions, biological consultant

Nicole Lobodzinski – consultant supporting coordination with Tribal nations and cultural resource work

We're working on local tidal generation and ways to make our grid more reliable and fossil-free. Tidal power because tides move on a regular basis. We use most of our heating in winter when solar power is least available.

Project Overview: now we're in phase 1, assessing Feasibility. Site characterization, community outreach, economic analysis, and technological qualification. And Tribal outreach and communications that precede formal consultation.

Several partners, including PNNL. Several sites shown to have enough flow. Rosario strait and eastern Blakeley identified as the least risk area. But still years ahead in this investigation. The technology of this unit has been in place in the Orkney Islands, Scotland. Russel details some specifications in terms of dimensions, power output, etc.

Cameron: Site characterization; OPALCO and UW using a seafloor and a mid-water system for assessing flow, ambient sound, also picks up any fish tags. More details about surveys done with these instruments in Fall 2024.

Justin: Project permitting; this falls under jurisdiction of FERC (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission), includes hydro and wave-generated power within navigable waters. This group is the federal lead for hydro-power projects. All other permits funnel up through federal process. OPALCO is applying for a 'pilot project' i.e. short-term research-related, not commercial. We've used many years of data and independent/objective environmental risk analysis, plan to identify where studies and monitoring needs to occur over the life of the project. Notice of intent to file with FERC in July 2024. Draft License Application Submittal will happen in April 2025, Public Comment Period in summer 2025. Potential Future Phases – FERC process will continue with final licensing in 2026, additional environmental studies. At least 5 years before any action. Our current project information lives on this webpage and will continue to be updated, <https://www.opalco.com/quick-fact-opalco-tidal-energy-pilot-project/2022/11/>

QUESTIONS

Craig: Is it scalable? feasible to have more units and what would be costs, environmental impacts of that?

Russel: we want to study one as a pilot, it's experimental. The grant money comes within range of feasibility

Karin: Two questions – first to clarify, what percentage of power would this contribute?

Russel: There are annual loads, but varies by season and time of day. Extreme range between 15-90 megawatts. Used estimates to get at approximately 20%

Karin: and how are you measuring impacts on marine life? Whales, impacts on seafloor, etc.

Cameron: For this area there are listed species (marbled murrelets, some salmonids, whales, etc.). We go through ESA review with the federal services/agencies in charge of those species, investigate presence and maintenance of operations (how will system be deployed and retrieved, etc.). Federal services will decide about adverse effects

Karin: local activists concerned and should be included on all phases, not destroy what we've been trying to protect

Cam: We'll be working with Federal agencies and state equivalents (WDFW, DNR) and ensure there are comment periods, public outreach etc. Need to rely on local experience when it comes to data like orca sightings.

Frankie: I'm the marine project manager for SJ County. My post-doc dealt with turbine noise around the SJI's. I'm curious about a pilot being chosen to take place in a designated Marine Stewardship Area. There are many species and habitats struggling here. From a monitoring standpoint, what are long-term plans? We are fortunate to have SMRU here in SJI's, global leader in this area, you should consult with them if haven't already. And what's OPALCO's expertise in deployment and maintenance? Is that all covered by grants or are costs covered by membership?

Russell: the grants cover capital costs. But we've been operating in this marine environment since the 1930's, serve multiple islands and handle subtidal cables. We have technical expertise in certain areas

- Cam provides some details about noise effects, less than the effect of tanker noise because it's a passive system

Justin: acoustics is at the top of the list for permitting and ongoing monitoring

Krista: any further questions – please reach out to communications at OPALCO.

10:53 AM • Kelp exhibit at SJI Museum of Art

Christina Koons

Upcoming exhibit about kelp at the San Juan County Museum of Art, September-December 2025. Collaboration between art and science. I sent out a pdf about it. Wondering how MRC can be involved and help promote

Karin: do they want volunteers, what do they need? ACTION: Christina will reach out to Betsy Peabody to ask

10:57 AM • MRC subcommittee updates

o Outreach & Education

Katie Johnson

Planning a Marina roundtable. Anyone connected with folks who would be interested, please let us know

o Plastic Free Salish Sea

Karin Roemers-Kleven/Katie

Johnson

nothing to report at this time, yet to meet in the new year

o Seagrass Protection

Beth Tate/Katie Johnson

Frankie: as it pertains to vessel impacts, we have a contractual obligation to count vessel traffic throughout the winter at our spots we've been monitoring. On good weather days, please do your boat counts – get that data.

o Derelict Vessel Prevention

Adam Parrott/Kari Koski

Kari: follow up from winter storms. Removed five boats in last month; many were from the watchlist from prevention patrols. We were able to elicit responses from boat owners on ten different vessels. Must secure funding to continue patrols. We'll do those in Jan/Feb as weather allows, let Kari know if you're interested

o Oil Spill/ERTV-

Sam Whitridge

Lovel: At end of Inslee's tenure, proposed a budget for 2026-27. He didn't say the budget needed to include an ERTV, but he was in meetings to advocate for that as an oil spill prevention resource. There was a letter urging the governor to address the issue and a response. Lovel can share those two letters via email. And recent article by Tom Banse in Salish current, more information there about transmountain pipeline project <https://salish-current.org/2025/01/03/more-canada-crude-is-coming-but-trade-war-could-hamper-flow/> We should schedule a meeting to discuss the increase in this traffic, that can happen at a subcommittee meeting

11:04 AM **Adjourn MRC meeting**, Dave moves to adjourn, Sandy seconds

11:16 AM

Convene CAG Meeting

CAG Updates/Business

Sam Whitridge

• Planning/Overview of 2025 Salmon Recovery Grant Round

We're expecting close to our usual allocation, something around \$300K and then we will get another round of Riparian funding but won't know for a while exactly how much. Process starts by soliciting proposals. Site

visits will be a month earlier this year in the first week of April rather than May. Hope for good weather. Moved earlier due to Salmon Recovery Conference originally scheduled for May

- Cancellation of 2025 Salmon Recovery Conference

Happens every two years, brings together folks in salmon recovery across state, Frankie would have spoken about vessel impact work. But due to budget shortfalls, we're focusing on projects

Sam will send Letters of intent once they're in and TAG will start its review

Dave: unrelated to CAG, question about amount of material generated from vessel-crushing event?

Adam: material was taken away by a contractor. We tried to go down there for a site visit

Kari provides more details about the contractor and the breakdown of what was taken. We learned since then that that company may be under some litigation, always a concern. It's a challenge to find a solid vendor/good option for who to work with. Worth spending more time looking into best possible endpoints for this material.

11:26 AM Circle back to MRC interviews

Rich Newhart FH Port Commissioner, Joey Ullman from JenJay on Orcas, and Charles Bookman on Lopez, scientist, transportation expert, and consultant. We were very impressed with Charles Bookman and his background and knowledge, expertise in management, work with congress. We also liked Joey, brought a lot of enthusiasm, diving experience. We'd like to consider offering him a position on the TAG to weigh in on salmon projects. And for Rich, we'd like to offer him a position on LIO to maintain that port representation on our marine advisory committees.

Karin: what impressed me most about Charles was his kindness, didn't seem to be big on ego but a team player.

Adam: I liked all three. Charles has so much valuable background and abilities. Joey is very grounded in the work underwater, unique perspective, very realistic about what can be accomplished within regulations.

Sam: next, MRC recommends an individual to County Council for approval.

Christina: should we vote on your recommendation today?

Sam: yes, if you're ready, or we could send out resumes/applications if people wanted to do more review

MOTION: Lovel moves we recommend MRC appoint Charles bookman. Adam seconds. All in favor.

Sam: and to bring up diversity, we realize all three applicants are male but we are also interested in island diversity

ACTION: Kendra is taking a CWAC recommendation to Council for Jan 12th, can bring this as well

Olivia: if there's a way to involve Joey, we could really benefit from his enthusiasm (Sandy and Karin agree)

Sam: TAG is one way to get more formal involvement, and we need more members there, especially younger ones. But we can also encourage him to sit in on MRC meetings

Kari: back to the kelp exhibit, I'm so excited! I'd love to be involved in any committee, and make some kelp cocktails

Olivia: I think it would be great to have a kelp/science panel with folks from PSRF, the labs, Samish, etc. as part of it

Mike: the kelp exhibit is exciting; don't they have a meeting room there? Could we meet there and have a tour?

Karin: yes, we can ask about that. Their new director is very interested in collaborating

11:45 PM **Adjourn CAG Meeting**