



SAN JUAN COUNTY
Marine Resources
Committee



Marine Advisory Committees

MRC-CAG-LIO

Meeting Agenda

Thursday, November 6, 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 October meeting minutes – MRC Members
9:15 AM	Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Updates- Christina Koons <ul style="list-style-type: none">• November 7-8 NWSC Conference
9:25 AM	MRC Updates/Business <ul style="list-style-type: none">• MRC Youth Members Introduction- <i>Katie Johnson</i>• OPALCO Tidal Energy Proposal/MRC Next Steps-Sam Whitridge• 2025 MRC Retreat Planning- <i>Sam Whitridge</i>• MSA Report/Update on County Council Presentation- <i>Frances Robertson</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-Sam Whitridge/Lovel Pratt
10:05 AM	Committee member updates and any other business

10:10 AM	Adjourn MRC Meeting Convene LIO Meeting
10:10 AM	Presentation: San Juan County On-site Sewage Systems (OSS) Project Update- <i>Katherine Combs, San Juan County Dept of Environmental Health</i>
10:30 AM	LIO Business agenda- <i>Jason Lim/Katie Johnson</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion/Decision re: Healthy Shorelines Action Plan Funding • PSP Updates • Report on 11/5 Ecosystem Coordination Board (ECB) Meeting
11:00 AM	Adjourn LIO Meeting Convene CAG Meeting
11:00 AM	Presentation: Recap of Recently Completed Friends of the San Juans Salmon Recovery Projects- <i>Tina Whitman, Friends of the San Juans</i>
11:30 AM	CAG Updates/Business- <i>Sam Whitridge</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salmon Recovery Project Time Extension Requests: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Weeks Point Restoration ○ Eelgrass Mapping Project
12:00 PM	Adjourn CAG Meeting

MRC, CAG and LIO Committee Members in Attendance: Matt Arata, Charles Bookman, David Checkley, Kailey Genther, Rich Goodhart, Christina Koons, Adam Parrott, Lovel Pratt, Mike Ramsey, Kim Sundberg, Craig Smith, Beth Tate, Flora Vaught, Sandy Wyllie-Echeverria, Lola Walker

Ex-officio, County support staff and members of the public: Elizabeth Butler, Melissa Ciesielski, Audrey Coyne, Katherine Dietzman, Marta Green, Katie Johnson, Kari Koski, Jason Lim, Frances Robertson, Kendra Smith, Tina Whitman, Sam Whitridge

9:03 AM **Convene MRC Meeting**

Adam Parrott

9:03 AM **Public Comment**

9:03AM **Approve meeting agenda**

All

Kendra: I request an addition to the agenda - a budget update and request to pledge support. Approved, added.

Approve MRC October meeting minutes

MRC Members

There are no edits. David moves to approve, Beth seconds, all in favor. The October minutes are approved

9:05 AM **Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Updates**

Christina Koons

- November 7-8 NWSC Conference

Adam will be there, Katie and Frankie will represent staff, Frankie will present there about the vessel work

Christina: we didn't meet this month, the news is the conference. The agenda looks great, we'll report back

9:07 AM **MRC Updates/Business**

- MRC Youth Members Introduction

Katie Johnson

We have two new MRC members, our new youth members, Lola Walker and Flora Vaught.

Flora: I'm a senior at FHHS, I'm excited to be here and focus on issues involving the environment

Lola: I'm a senior at Orcas Island high school, I grew up sailing, I love the ocean and want to help protect it

We're excited for the youth representation, thank you for being here

9:10 AM **• OPALCO Tidal Energy Proposal/MRC Next Steps**

Sam Whitridge

Unfortunately, Jane Fuller couldn't attend today. Last month County Council had commented, and we had received a letter in response from OPALCO.

Kendra: there was a discussion at Council meeting about the dynamic between County and OPALCO. We're facilitating a Round Table about least-conflict solar siting, trying to help OPALCO. We think part of the reaction we received from them has to do with the frustration they experience trying to source energy and hitting wall after wall. That's planned for December 8th. To help extend an olive branch to OPALCO and work collaboratively with them, and then work toward something similar in the marine environment. Working at the staff level

Frankie: have there been any discussions of the submarine cables and contingency plans for when those need to be replaced? It's unrealistic to think we'll be energy independent out here. In our utilities we put things aside for capital projects down the road, we should be asking if that's happening for our submarine cables as well.

Beth: Is there interest in having more education about marine energy projects in general? I went to a workshop recently; many are working to assess impacts of marine energy projects. There are a lot of data out there.

-Frankie lists a variety of other resources, local and otherwise, marine mammal monitoring work, etc.

-more discussion of real risks/concerns and language used to address them

Charles: this discussion reflects the letter we sent, we suggested there were data out there that need to be looked at more. Our message was different than those from Tribes which were more negative in tone

-some discussion of individuals (suggested by Mike, Kendra) at OPALCO we could contact directly to build bridges

Adam: this has been a common topic in recent meetings, it could benefit us to have a subcommittee whose focus was communicating with Council and OPALCO and have representatives from OPALCO at our meetings.

Kendra: we're doing that with a Round Table forum with Climate and Sustainability, David Checkley is our rep there

David: I support that idea, but I feel the real need is for OPALCO to join with the MRC in an open discussion about tidal energy. I'm not in strong favor of another subcommittee. The Round Table is at the Council level and has equal representation from OPALCO. I think academic expertise is what's missing (the data Beth & Frankie referred to)

Frankie: don't want to hear OPALCO's sales pitch again. We're scientists and regulators with serious questions

Adam: so that that'll happen at the Round Table, but I'm trying to figure out what we as the MRC can do

Frankie: would the MRC be in a situation, and us as ES staff, be in a situation to facilitate that?

Kendra: I think we can wait until December 8th and see how next Council meeting goes. We need to pull together what we know from different sources. Does it add value for them to understand the concerns? Is there a way for us to navigate that with them in a positive manner?

David: I see a round table as allowing the heat level to be lowered, amicable discussion and develop trust.

Frankie: it's suitable to focus on the science but need to also acknowledge the impacts of these projects on Tribes' Treaty rights. We need to encourage OPALCO to go above and beyond in their consultations.

Beth: this may be an educational opportunity, I think OPALCO doesn't understand their obligation there

Frankie: I think there is also a general misunderstanding that Tribes are disproportionately impacted by these "green" energy developments. It is a broader issue that is coming up nationwide with renewable energy.

Lovel and Frankie both have suggestions for education on Tribal engagement for OPALCO

ACTION: Sandy will send this paper to Adam and Sam for circulation to MRC members, Austin, S., Wyllie-Echeverria, S. and Groom, M.J., 2004. A comparative analysis of submarine cable installation methods in Northern Puget Sound, Washington. *Journal of Marine Environmental Engineering*, 7(3)

9:37 AM Budget

Kendra Smith

Our budgets are largely grant-based. Kendra reviews current proposal amount, staffing cuts are possible. Our team is working dutifully – Sam, Frankie, and Katie have been bringing in grant money that will sustain us through 2027. We'll also be borrowing \$400K in float from the Clean water team. It's a loan we'll need to pay back. This idea is going to Council and we hope for support. I'll be presenting our budget on November 10th, anyone is welcome to come to the meeting and show support that would be appreciated. Or if anyone is willing to pledge support with donations, <https://www.sanjuancountywa.gov/1736/Donate>. That also helps instill in Council that there's local support for the marine program. Need to come right at beginning for public comment at 9am. My presentation is around 10:15am. This has been a lot of budget gymnastics, doing whatever we can to keep program going

Lovel: I'm curious, you're right that general funds are volatile but that's also where some opportunity can be found. Do you have any advice about what other areas we should be looking to for funding?

Kendra: we're fortunate for the grants we have. We have \$40K assigned to us as part of levy lid lift. There may be another one in 2026

-some note about what IOSA receives

ACTION ITEM: Lola is willing to help at the Council meeting as a youth voice of support

9:49 AM • 2025 MRC Retreat Planning

Sam Whitridge

Katie, Kari, Adam and I met earlier this week to plan the agenda for Dec. 4th at FHL. We plan to discuss fundraising writ large, tapping into resources for funding.

ACTION ITEM: Sam will send out the NWSC guidance document to help folks to consider ideas

Sam: we want subcommittees to come to MRC with a couple slides about what you've worked on in the past year, what's coming up for next year. I'll send out that request formally via email, with list of who's on subcommittees. The retreat is a good time to revisit those, see if we need reshuffle etc. We'll have an ice breaker, and lunch. It would be great to hear from a keynote speaker – a couple of ideas are discussed, e.g. Joe Gaydos
Lola and Flora would both be glad to offer a presentation from youth perspective

9:57 AM • MSA Report/Update on County Council Presentation *Frances Robertson*
Updates 2007 plan with this report, <https://www.sanjuancountywa.gov/DocumentCenter/View/33565/Resolution-35-2025-SJC-Marine-Stewardship-Area-Report> We want this to be adopted by Council, incorporate 2025 report. When the Shoreline Master code is reopened, we'll also be working with DCD on that and providing this document to them as a resource. One thing in our grant for next biennium as MRC is outreach to the community about recommendations in this document, reaffirming partnerships to move on the actions listed in the report. Tina Whitman reminded me that by listing which organizations are responsible for what, it holds them to account. Kari drills into me that when we talk about SJC from a marine perspective, we should be talking about the MSA – it's important that the County was designated as such. We need to keep talking about it in our messaging until it's commonly known. We live in a marine stewardship area, let's keep communicating it to our partners

10:04 AM • MRC subcommittee updates *Katie Johnson*
o Outreach & Education
Report back on the October 18th event, it was successful. Katie and Frankie both relate details of who was there. There were nine organizations, it was powerful reminiscing and excited about what we can build for next year

10:07 AM o Plastic Free Salish Sea *Karin Roemers-Kleven/Katie Johnson*
Great Islands Clean up – Katie reports on people involved and total volume of material removed. There was a cool new video created by our interns about boaters not shrink-wrapping boats

10:09 AM o Seagrass Protection *Beth Tate/Frankie Robertson*
The HSIL stressor project is underway and collecting data. Vessel counts are continuing. Kari and Frankie completed first vessel-based survey in October.
David Checkley: question about American cruise line ship anchoring in Parks Bay. These are big anchors and chain, could have a large effect. The other issue is the noise that has bothered residents around Shaw.
Tina: I've looked at maps with approximate locations of those cruise ships and they are deeper than eelgrass/kelps.
Lovel: this also affects campers on Shaw. This is a great opportunity to look at this with Council, in comp plan -more discussion of issue of large ships like this one, how little they benefit local islands, etc.
Beth: sometimes smaller ships impact more. Large ships will only tie up at the breakwater.
Frankie: Craig Smith would be able to provide good input regarding anchoring impacts to the benthic environment. If I remember correctly, it takes ~3 months for the benthic habitat to recover from anchor scars. Do they know they are operating in a Marine Stewardship Area? How would the stewardship pass work for these cruise ships?
Beth: Likely they do not, or if they do, they might be using it as a selling point. Places like the Galapagos require these commercial activities to pay a fee for the use of the "park."
Adam: how did we get jet skis banned in county code in the 90's?
Frankie: required engaging with State Attorneys' office
Tina: there are new larger jet skis registered as boats- so we started seeing them last summer
Frankie: jet skis can operate in the county, but they can't launch or land from within the County. There is an annual group that travels up to Alaska via jet ski that does come through and refuels here each year.
Lovel: this could identify need for a subcommittee?

Kendra: Council has been hearing an earful from folks about frustration on this issue

Charles: this has been a fight elsewhere, the cruise ship industry worldwide, there are data we could pull together

MOTION: Charles moves we form a 'Cruise Ship' subcommittee with purpose of pulling together background information. Lovel seconds, SO MOVED, we have a cruise ship subcommittee

ACTION ITEM: Let's put that on the agenda to assign a lead and members at the retreat

10:25 AM o Derelict Vessel Prevention

Adam Parrott/Kari Koski

Kari says they continue vessel and land patrols, we're watching 12, six vessels of concern, removed three. There are two vessels in vessel turn in program with DNR. Sonora made new videos about preparing vessels for winter, etc.

10:27 AM o Oil Spill/ERTV

Sam Whitridge/Lovel Pratt

We need to schedule a subcommittee meeting; I'll work on that with Lovel. Schedule it for before the retreat

10:27 AM **Committee member updates and any other business**

Marta: I attended the PacStates/BC Oil Spill Task Force annual meeting yesterday. Very informative on US/BC recent and shared future challenges. A presentation on oil spill modeling in the Salish Sea that I'm following up on.

10:27 AM **Adjourn MRC Meeting,**

11:01 AM **Convene CAG Meeting**

11:02 AM **Presentation: Recently Completed Friends of the San Juans Salmon Recovery Projects** *Tina Whitman*

I'm going to talk about two completed projects and then where we're at with eelgrass restoration

On Shaw at Broken Point, we removed creosote piling. Relocated some structure landward. There were 28 horizontal feet of beach unburied. Shows how bulkhead structures cause more flooding issues. Now the owner has experienced fewer issues with flooding with natural berm. The natural beach is better for fish and people

- Kim and Mike have a couple questions about restoration and maintenance, including the planting that replaced the dune grass. The were salt-tolerant native species that will soak up water and hold soil together

Then another project at Neck Point was implemented this past summer. Moved 200 linear feet of rock bulkhead. Cleaned up intertidal. Kendra comments on how much better the beach looks.

Katherine: Shoutout to Matt Arata and Erin Graham and Levi with A1 Marine with their amazing work!

Tina describes the process of added complication due to current situation with federal funding

Eelgrass Research Update:

We're now at the point of gathering data with scientists, hope to be ready to share with managers, the community, etc. by Spring. But we're not going to make our December deadline. One reason is issues with scheduling our research vessel. There's a major mapping component, eelgrass mapping, land use impact, and then action plan. The mapping – in 2003 Friends, FHL and DNR partnered and we're doing it again 20 years later. Detailed transect surveys, surveying exact same lines as 20 years ago

Tina reviews details for specific sites and for how mapping and change analysis was done. Most declines are in shallow edges of bays. We're seeing dramatic declines across 16 sites, and just one showing increase

Elizabeth Butler: If you have room in your SRFB grant for AA&E you could bill us for some of that admin time working through the NFWF funding. The big picture: that effort ended up saving (hopefully) SRFB/PSAR funding that hopefully can be moved to other projects on the LE list. And if you could attach the ppts to the PRISM projects (or email to me and i will) these are great project summaries, and amendment requests summaries, too.

-More detailed discussion about some specific sites & patterns

Correlating data with other studies, as part of HSIL eelgrass stressor project. Higher levels of eelgrass wasting disease correlate with shallower bays. Spatial analysis to look at overwater structures, land and vessel use as they relate to each of the study embayments

-brief discussion of freshwater sources and related water quality as one land-use issue affecting eelgrass

Tina: those non embayment declines will also show up a bit in changes in extent through the countywide deep edge meander data that were close to finalizing- and its one of Drew and Olivia's/DNR longer time sites.

11:42AM CAG Updates/Business

Sam Whitridge

- Salmon Recovery Project Time Extension Requests: the Weeks Point Restoration and the Eelgrass Mapping Project (that Tina just discussed). MRC members who are also CAG members can vote

MOTION: Kendra moves to approve the extensions, Adam seconds. All in favor. Lovel abstains but supports.

APPROVED.

-some discussion of the Jackson Beach project, importance of telling that story for the County. OPALCO has been a good partner on the project.

Frankie: this discussion is making me think that one next step in the vessel impact work is to collect water quality samples at the sites identified as high-density. This might fit well for a Rose Foundation grant, but it might also be something to consider for the LIO money

11:48 AM Adjourn CAG Meeting