



SAN JUAN COUNTY
Marine Resources
Committee



Marine Advisory Committees **MRC-CAG-LIO** **Meeting Agenda**

Thursday, February 6th, 2025
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 January meeting minutes – MRC Members
9:15 AM	NWSC Meeting Report to the MRC- Christina Koons
9:20 AM	Presentation on Working with the Northwest Straits Foundation- Don Hunger, NWSF Executive Director
9:40 AM	MRC Updates/Business • Welcome new Marine Advisory Committee Members- <i>Sam Whitridge</i> • Discussion re: MRC projects for 2025-2027 grant- <i>Sam Whitridge</i> • Revisit OPALCO Tidal Energy Project and possible MRC comment letter - <i>Sam Whitridge</i> • Update on MRC role in Orcas Landing Marine Interpretive Area next iteration – <i>Susan Eshelman</i> • Dept of Ecology Shoreline Master Plan Rulemaking, MRC Comment Opportunity- <i>Barbara Bennett, Island County MRC</i> • MRC subcommittee updates ○ 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
10:45 AM	Committee member updates and any other business
10:50 AM	Adjourn MRC Meeting Convene LIO Meeting
10:50 AM	San Juan LIO discussion regarding the EPA Puget Sound Funding Model Proposal- <i>Peter Murchie, EPA and Larry Epstein, PSP</i>
11:20 AM	LIO Business agenda – <i>Katie Johnson/Sam Whitridge</i> ● PSP Updates- <i>Jason Lim</i> ● Review nominations for San Juan County seat on the Ecosystem Coordination Board (ECB) ● Early planning for San Juan Local Forum at August Leadership Council Meeting
11:40 AM	Adjourn LIO Meeting Convene CAG Meeting
11:40 AM	CAG Updates/Business- <i>Sam Whitridge</i> ● Nominations for San Juan County seat on the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council ● 2025 Grant Round Letter of Interest Review Process
12:00 PM	● Adjourn CAG Meeting

MRC, CAG and LIO Committee Members in Attendance: Matt Arata, Charles Bookman, David Checkley, Kailey Genther, Patti Gobin, Olivia Graham, Christina Koons, Adam Parrott, Lovel Pratt, Mike Ramsey, Kimbal Sundberg, Sandy Wyllie-Echeverria

Ex-officio, County support staff and members of the public: Angela Adams, Barbara Bennett, Katherine Combs, Susan Eshelman, Kirsten Feifel, Marta Green, Krista Harrington, Sasha Horst, Don Hunger, Katie Johnson, Kari Koski, Jason Lim, Peter Murchie, Dana Oster, Jessica Owens, Frances Robertson, Joey Ullman, Daniel Vekved, Sam Whitridge, Jeff Whitty, Marjorie Wonham

9:01 AM **Convene MRC meeting**

Adam Parrott

9:02 AM **Public Comment**

Lovel: FYI here's info about a bill that has a hearing tomorrow in the Senate: <https://sanjuans.org/hb-1652-and-sb-5519-a-simple-solution-to-pollution/>

9:03 AM **Approve meeting agenda, Approve MRC January minutes**

MRC mem-

bers

Dave moves to approve the agenda, Sandy seconds. No additions or edits. The agenda is approved. No edits to the minutes, Dave moves to approve the January minutes. Sandy seconds. All in favor, the minutes are approved

9:06 AM **NWSC Meeting Report to the MRC**

Sasha Horst

We had a commission meeting, highlights included: adopted some meeting norms, science advisory committee planning another virtual workshop in October, we discussed the definition of the NW straits initiative Christina: NW Straits Initiative Norms for Courageous Conversations, 'The norms will help to ensure that we have effective ways of addressing harmful remarks & miscommunications in a productive manner; also helpful tools for navigating difficult conversations. The NWS Commission Executive Committee has reviewed these and referred them to the NWS Commission for consideration as guiding principles for conducting Commission meetings.'

9:09 AM **Presentation on Working with the Northwest Straits Foundation**

Don Hunger

How to collaborate with MRC's, giving this presentation to each MRC –our staff and board, how to collaborate. Don introduces Board of Directors (includes Doug McCutcheon), board members serve 3-year terms. Staff includes Don as executive director, Lisa Kaufman is Director of Programs, Jason Morgan is Marine Program manager, and several others. The purpose of this talk is about how we solicit funds; we don't gift directly but we can help raise funds. Don is the lead grant writer with the foundation, we get funds when there are specific grants we can secure. These funds aren't in conflict with anything from the commission, these are for extra needs, small projects

Olivia asks about the process for application for funds, Don clarifies –for 'incubator' ideas, you have an idea and need to know how to fund. Think of the foundation as a fundraising partner. Starts with identifying the project

Charles: what's the competition? Is this just MRC's?

Don: all fundraising within NWSI is for MRC's. Sometimes partner among MRC's, not for independent organizations. Feel free to call or email with project ideas. Don 360-739-9909 or don@nwstraitsfoundation.org

9:23 AM **MRC Updates/Business**

• Welcome new Marine Advisory Committee Members

Sam Whitridge

Welcome to Charles Bookman and Joey Ullman. Charles on Lopez, new MRC voting member added a couple weeks ago. Joey is on Orcas, works for Jenjay, joining the Salmon TAG. MRC is full and we wanted to bring Joey on – here now as a nonvoting member and we'll reevaluate down the road

Charles: thank you. I live on Lopez. I have a broad ocean background and I love applying that to local issues

Joey: thanks everyone. I have a background in biology, invertebrates, connections with FHL, I'm glad to be here

9:28 AM • Discussion re: MRC projects for 2025-2027 grant

Sam Whitridge

Sasha: process for grant, next steps. Over coming months, submit proposals by May, meanwhile we'll discuss them and make sure questions are answered, then move forward with grant agreements. Three sources of funding (State, NOAA, and EPA through Puget sound partnership)

Frankie: NOAA federal funding that's already secured, given current uncertainty, is there risk of it being revoked?

Sasha: our plan is to proceed as we've laid out in our timeline and adapt as needed. We'll continue moving forward

Sam briefly lists current projects with submerged aquatic vegetation and marine stewardship vessel work.

Olivia: potential new project ideas;

- develop signage for 4th of July Beach and potentially other beaches to inform visitors about ecological value of eelgrass as well as traditional/cultural value, also generate excitement and support for marine conservation. Eelgrass ecology signage, but also kelp maybe by cattle pass, signs highlighting mussels or other habitats

- small signage at Jackson beach near dog poop dispensers, encourage folks to take a bag and clean the beach.

- from January MRC meeting, someone mentioned the kelp exhibit at SJI art museum. We could have a kelp science panel there, a kelp film screening. These ideas were on page 12 of the kelp pdf sent out last month

Mar: This summer's ocean science-arts workshop at FHL would be interested in collaborating on kelp art projects! Please email me if interested mwonham@uw.edu

Lovel: In terms of eelgrass signage Friends of the San Juans' has already partnered with SJC MRC and other groups for signage at SJC ports and marinas. And in terms of signage at dog poop dispensers, Clallam County MRC coasters included a fact about the amount of dog poop just among licensed dogs in their county. And it's not just on beaches, it's everywhere

Adam: reminder that signage at Jackson beach needs to be by permission of the port

Frankie: NPS has been interested in adding signage related to shoreline habitats also.

Charles: SJC Parks has put several eelgrass signs up at public access points. They are very helpful.

Sam: any other thoughts on those ideas or any other ideas we want to consider for this biennium's project list?

Kailey: are we still working on the building down at Cattle Point?

Katie: yes, I've been working with DNR on that, stay tuned – more to come

9:44 AM • Revisit OPALCO Tidal Energy Project and possible MRC comment letter

Sam Whitridge

Any follow up thoughts on that presentation or advisory actions we'd like to take as an MRC?

Charles: I attended the meeting on Lopez. They are in an environmental assessment phase, probably premature to take a stand on size/scope etc. They are 'floating' preliminary ideas, not specific, and it's entirely grant-funded

Dave: My sense is that it's a long-term aim, will play out over several decades. One option is for the MRC to indicate that the County should have a keen interest in how things develop, indicate wish to stay informed.

Adam: in the presentation they gave to us at the MRC they mentioned the noise impact

Charles: they don't have data yet. But OPALCO has a problem; they buy power from Bonneville and they get an allotment. But during cold snaps we're using an excess of that allotment, need to buy more on the open market.

Dave: I'm cognizant of the concerns for the marine environment, but appreciating our future needs and the need to consider all avenues seems valuable, link to a presentation I saw on this topic

<https://vimeo.com/858816026>

Lovel: this type of turbine is not permitted in the States, I think there's some grant money but I'm curious what matching funds the utility has to provide

Charles: I presume staff costs are provided by OPALCO. About noise, in this system the turbine is moving at the speed of tidal flow, not high-speed. It'll be spinning at the same rate of the current speed through Rosario straits

Frankie: tidal power development is still in very early days, not yet running at commercial scale. Only one commercial-level operation in Scotland. There have been numerous studies done, mostly in Europe around the UK, looking at effects of tidal turbines on marine life as well as the pilot in Snohomish County. That project had massive cost overruns and significant objections from Treaty tribes. But this is super early days

Matt: It keeps coming up is that this isn't a good place for this because of all the endangered species. So if not here, where could this work? We're cut off from main power grid unless we have more submarine cables. Other issues come up if we can't make it work. We don't have enough capacity to run the power we need in the near future.

Frankie: the reality is that tidal energy is best placed in high energy locations where there is inevitably high biodiversity, https://www.pnnl.gov/publications-reports?keywords=tidal%20energy&field_document_type=All

Patti: we haven't had much engagement, this is still an unknown to the Tulalip and it affects our lifeways. Next steps, Staff will keep in touch with OPALCO, keep abreast of the project and inform the MRC

10:04 AM • Update on MRC role in Orcas Landing Marine Interpretive Area next iteration *Susan Eshelman*
I work with Environmental Stewardship as a technician, I do GIS work for ES and the Clean water utility and riparian and nearshore vegetation work. The Orcas interpretative areas is a ¾ acre parcel. The MRC was involved in 2021 with some of the improvements at that time. From 1885-1949 it was a warehouse, store, etc. Then some infrastructure fill, an old dock (Susan shares photos over the years). Public Works and ES have put in several walls, in 2010 an Orcas Landing Master plan. Susan shows photos of more recent revegetation, native plants and plugs. This spring should be lots of wildflowers blooming. Mural in 2021 – historic lead paint was removed. This mural was commissioned with MRC help. The request was put out, MRC did a scoring system based on a set of values established by the Orcas Landing Maser plan. It's been four years, it was meant to last 5-10 years. It was done on six total plywood panels. We'll probably stick with these measurements, but next mural on aluminum panels

I've modified the last RFP somewhat; I can send that out and MRC can discuss what they want for next mural
QUESTIONS

-Susan clarifies funding, RFP should go out in next few months to take advantage of all funds available. But flexible, could go out by June. Most RFP's are 90 days. Maybe more flexible with small 'artworks'.

Dave: is the RFP to develop something that's going to be put up six years from now?

Susan shows mural conditions in 2021 vs. 2023. But we'd like to preserve this work, possibly restore it and move to a different location. We're still working on who would remove this one and install the new one

10:17 AM • Dept of Ecology Shoreline Master Plan Rulemaking, MRC Comment Opportunity. *Barbara Bennett*

I want to mention the signage we have in our wharf in Coupeville, we'd be glad to talk about materials and display strategies, etc. Our signs have been up for 15-20 years, must be maintained but still carrying their messages

I'm here today because the Dept. of Ecology is holding an opportunity for comment on shoreline master planning legislations, open for another month or so. Then a long process ahead for reviewing what they do. The question of domain over shoreline comes up constantly. The shoreline management program designates 200' upland as the area it addresses, often overlaps with private property and negotiation with owners is a parcel-by-parcel process but ecological processes need a long range of shoreline. I wrote a comment to Island County about our concerns: "While the shore friendly program is well-tailored for parcel by parcel strategy, this strategy isn't sufficient to achieve no net loss in ecological functions. Shoreline resilience requires a more comprehensive approach..."

We have a study showing that 90% of new armoring has been done without a permit, a small percentage was done even though a permit was refused. That's since 2016 when comprehensive plan was updated the last time.

We've tried to articulate the importance of shaping how the shoreline is regulated. Does shoreline management program have the authority to be more restrictive on privately property or does owner have the last word? This came up in our SILS meeting last fall, wondering if we could inject some influence in the rule-making process

Charles: the shoreline boundary, which in WA goes back about 50 years, is a very powerful permitting tool. It's administered in SJ county by the dept that does construction permitting.

Sam: we did our Salmon recovery chapter update a few years ago, tried to integrate it across county departments.

Lovel: I could connect you with Tina Whitman who's also working on comments to address this legislation

<https://sanjuans.org/course-correction-needed-for-rapidly-changing-shorelines/>

[https://sanjuans.org/wp-](https://sanjuans.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/SanJuanCountyArmorChangeAnalysisandRegulatoryReviewProject_2022_FriendsoftheSanJuans-1.pdf)
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Joey: as a biologist who writes a lot of permits and reports, the main disparity that I see is that we must operate on data that's 20 years old in a dynamic area. In terms of hands-on perspective if we could have more updated data about these species we care about in the parcels we're working in. how to incentivize getting new data?

Barbara: comments should be directly to the committee, not to me. Accepting comments now, the sooner the better, but maybe through March they'd still be accepted. I just wanted to encourage each locality to do this

Mike: I feel the elephant in the room is the enforcement aspect, when so many projects aren't being permitted. What's the State response, is it in the shoreline management act itself?

Barbara: it's really delegated down to the most local level

Dana Oster: Adding Island MRC's armoring analysis too! [071724-shoreline-armoring-survey-and-permit-analysis.pdf](#)

10:46 AM • MRC subcommittee updates

o Outreach & Education

Katie Johnson

I spoke to this earlier with updates to Cattle Point

o Plastic Free Salish Sea

Katie Johnson

Save the date for Spring GICU (Great Islands Clean Up), April 26 on SJI, Shaw, and Orcas and April 12 on Lopez

Monthly beach cleanups continuing, March 2 beach clean-up at Jackson

o Seagrass Protection

Sandy Wyllie-Echeverria

The NPS sponsoring virtual science symposium, Feb 11-13. I'll circulate that information

Frankie: as it relates to vessel impact work, encourage members to get out and do boat counts on good weekends throughout the winter. It's a grant deliverable, we're compiling that data. I've been doing it out on the water as we're able to do marine patrols. Garrison Bay, Westcott Bay, Odlin County Park, Blind Bay, Eastsound

Christina: about the kelp exhibit coming up at county art museum September-December. I spoke with Betsy Peabody and she's interested in the MRC engaging. Ideas we talked about include a kelp soiree, kelp-tinis, a panel discussion, many ideas related to the MRC's work. Should we form a small subcommittee of folks interested in working on this? I've passed on Mar's interest to Besty and they're planning to meet. Karin and Kari are interested

ACTION: if interested, contact Christina –“it can be a disappearing task force”; circle back next meeting with a list

10:55 AM o Oil Spill/ERTV

Sam Whitridge

Lovel presented at Task Force meeting, share link: <https://vimeo.com/1052354576> ,

<https://cenv.wvu.edu/speaker-series/commercial-shipping-impacts-and-risks-salish-sea>

There's a hearing coming up in subcommittee that would require ships to use less fuel and would eliminate the use of scrubbers, talked about in Lovel's presentation, also advocated for an ERTV. The subcommittee is trying to wrap up a summary of a handout that can be distributed as needed to address the effectiveness of the Ecology report.

10:57 AM o Derelict Vessel Prevention

Kari Koski

Finishing up now with dismantling of five boats moved in storms, working on database and priorities for 2025. We have 8-10 vessels on that list now I'll share with the subcommittee, two immediate vessels I'm working on now.

I will attend the 3-day workshop at the end of this month on the topic of derelict vessels and debris, really looking for solutions of where to put these vessels to avoid landfills. Working with County Sheriff's office and with Port, bumping up against some legal and safety issues so want to have better protocols

Look for a fun article coming out soon on the story of the El Capitan!

11:00 AM **Adjourn MRC meeting**

February 6, 2025

LIO & Meeting Summary

MRC, CAG and LIO Committee Members in Attendance: Matt Arata, Charles Bookman, David Checkley, Kailey Genther, Christina Koons, Adam Parrott, Mike Ramsey, Kimbal Sundberg, Sandy Wyllie-Echeverria

Ex-officio, County support staff and members of the public: Angela Adams, Katherine Combs, Kirsten Feifel, Marta Green, Krista Harrington, Katie Johnson, Kari Koski, Jason Lim, Peter Murchie, Frances Robertson, Joey Ullman, Daniel Vekved, Sam Whitridge, Jeff Whitty, Marjorie Wonham

11:00 AM

Convene LIO meeting

11:01 AM **San Juan LIO discussion regarding the EPA Puget Sound Funding Model Proposal** *Peter Murchie*

There was some dialogue yesterday at the Ecosystem Coordination Board meeting so your comments have already been submitted. Review of some LIO functions – we have a five-year action plan to support the action agenda, includes work with Tribes, transboundary issues, etc. All in the context of bottom-up collaborative governance space. We have a great team here – Angela and Kirsten introduce themselves. We're all part of Puget Sound Partnership. We have a role in approving the action agenda, but it's flexible and meant to be driven by needs of each ecosystem and partners. We support partners with funding and expertise. Our main areas of support are through Puget Sound Partnership that sub-awards to LIO's and to MRC's. In design and implementation there's need for collaboration. We set action plan and then set up large grantees to sub-award over multiple years. In existing funding model, we were able to fully fund existing LIO's for next 2-3 years. Now there's a new action agenda coming up. The processes we're already engaged in institutes what the next action agenda includes; it will fund your priorities if you've been clear about them.

It's important that we have our cooperative agreement set up before next action agenda rolls out so there's no time lag. I'll be meeting with leadership council mid-March and hope we have consensus by then.

We'll go out to compete this summer, get applications in and review them so we can make awards in fall/winter, by start of 2026. We want to be part of a collaborative space to fund your needs. We'd like to add a fourth marine SIL not to supplant the good work already happening with shellfish, stormwater, eelgrass and kelp. Written comment period is closed but management is still actively listening. Peter shares slides,

- seeking input on guiding principles, the Action agenda is big but can't cover everything – setting priorities

- shows list of organizations that have submitted comments by 1/31

- reminders that under our statutory authority a 1:1 match is required, that's covered by cooperative agreement holders i.e. State agencies so it doesn't pass on to projects. That's a unique feature in our next funding model.

We appreciate the SIL's, but they have some administrative burden, feedback is always helpful

- We're not just funding projects on the ground per se, a lot is around program alignment and policy work.

- Diagram shows existing funding model – Habitat, Shellfish, and Stormwater are in the action agenda

Option B shows suggested new HSIL with Habitat, Shellfish, Stormwater *and* Marine – some topics have just moved categories. This reflects the conversation over past six years around these important topics.

Question: Is there anything missing here that's important to us in SJL's? Leadership Conference in March

Kim: our emphasis is on do-no-harm, highest priority in stewardship plan is prevention of oil spill and protecting existing habitat, keeping it intact. Risk of oil spill from tankers and continued expansion of Vancouver's port. And mapping sand lance habitat which is key to supporting salmon. We've been trying to fund mapping of benthic habitat which will also be affected by sinking oil

- How can we better integrate 'do no harm' into this whole model?

Kirsten: in the action agenda, we are trying to include protection language as much as possible – equal or even more important than restoration. There is an implementation strategy being developed for submerged vegetation. If you want, develop more action plans highlighting the role of protection

Marta: You mentioned earlier that the funding supports some transboundary efforts. Can you give us an update on where efforts are regarding a Transboundary Caucus? The last that group met in September 2023. Recalling when the ECB met with our LIO here, there was a commitment of the recognition/role to keep Caucus going.

Peter: I'm still co-chair of that management conference, it's informal. We need to reconvene and continue discussion around a few key topics. There was no conscious decision not to meet, just inertia. We also have the Salish Sea statement of cooperation between EPA and Environment Canada. We finalized and adopted a multi-year action plan from that, available on our website. Please keep pushing for Transboundary conferences!

Kirsten speaks a bit more to question of transboundary issues in the agenda; once agenda is completed plans to share with a Canadian counterpart

Sam: it's helpful to see the Marine piece there. We've struggled with issues from vessel impacts, we're constantly trying to tell that story on a regional level

Frankie: vessel impacts aren't just an issue here it happens throughout Puget Sound. That includes nearshore anchoring but also large vessel impacts, including oil spill potential and sewage issues.

Shared in the chat: <https://www.epa.gov/puget-sound/us-canada-cooperation-salish-sea>

11:44 AM

Krista Harrington, PhD student – part of the human dimensions team providing data to the Partnership, here to introduce dissertation research, looking at the role of expertise and identifying barriers. Funded by the EPA. Phase 1 of this research is just starting, aims to characterize climate change expertise and look at which aspects of expertise are most recognized and essential. The SJC LIO represents expertise. Participating in this research consists of a 60-90 minute interview. I'll be based in Puget Sound in May. I'll follow up with Sam to send out a flyer. Please contact me if interested, krista.harrington@oregonstate.edu

Kim: I'd like to talk to you, Sam will connect Krista and Kim

Kari: great project, look forward to learning more. I'll have Sam put us in touch.

11:49 AM • Review nominations for SJC seat on the ECB and the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council

The Ecosystem Coordination Board (ECB) is a more formal process; for the PS Salmon Recovery Council we can just tell them who we want to put forward. Sam sent out the application from Jane Fuller, interested in sitting on the ECB. Precedent has been to have our council marine liaison serve in both of those roles. Jane will be our marine liaison from County Council for this year. Katie and Sam met with her to start getting up to speed with all things marine and salmon recovery. We got no other applicants for the ECB. If we want to move forward with Jane as rep, pass that along to the PSP and they approve at their leadership council meeting in March.

Kim: has Jane participated as a liaison from the Council with any of these meetings?

Sam: she attended our local forum a couple years ago and some of the NW Straits commission meetings.

Kim: she has a steep learning curve. I don't have a problem with it, but does she interact with the federal government much? She'll need to come up to speed on issues but let's put her forward

Sam: I'll work closely to brief her before every meeting on relevant topics and our advisory input

Charles: I spoke briefly with Jane about her joining the Council. She takes her duties very seriously and looking forward to rolling up her sleeves; I'm in favor of her taking up this representative role with these other bodies.

MOTION: Dave moves to accept Jane as rep for both seats, Adam seconds. All in favor, motion passes

11:55 AM • Planning for SJ Local Forum at August Leadership Council Meeting *Katie Johnson/Sam Whitridge*

Scheduled for August 20-21 with the Leadership Council here in the San Juans. Similar opportunity to 2023 with the ECB. It's an opportunity to pose a question to them. We should start thinking about what we'd like to discuss with them. Continue with the priorities we discussed with ECB like ERTV and oil spill prevention? Save those dates, and think of topics. Could also include a field trip or site visit to projects we've been working on. Let's talk about ideas the next time we meet

11:58 AM Adjourn LIO Meeting