



SAN JUAN COUNTY
Marine Resources
Committee



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

Thursday, January 8th, 2026
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 December retreat minutes – MRC Members
9:15 AM	Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Updates- Christina Koons
9:25 AM	MRC Updates/Business • 2026 MRC Work Plan- <i>Sam Whitridge</i> • 2026 MRC Subcommittee Review-<i>Sam Whitridge</i> • Update on MRC Grants and Funding- <i>Sam Whitridge</i> • Update/discussion on OPALCO tidal energy project-<i>Russell Guerry</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/Lovel Pratt</i>

10:15 AM	Committee member updates and any other business
10:20 AM	Adjourn MRC Meeting Convene LIO Meeting
10:20 AM	Discussion with PSP Staff regarding Marine Program funding alternatives
10:50 AM	Presentation: San Juan County On-site Sewage Systems (OSS) Project Update- <i>Katherine Combs, San Juan County Dept of Environmental Health</i>
11:15 AM	LIO Business agenda- <i>Jason Lim/Katie Johnson</i> • Update re: Healthy Shorelines Action Plan Funding • PSP Updates
11:30 AM	Adjourn LIO Meeting Convene CAG Meeting
11:30 AM	CAG Updates/Business- <i>Sam Whitridge</i> • 2026 Salmon Recovery Grant Round Planning and Timeline
12:00 PM	Adjourn CAG Meeting

MRC, CAG and LIO Committee Members in Attendance: Paul Andersson, Matt Arata, Charles Bookman, David Checkley, Kailey Genther, Rich Goodhart, Brian Goodremont, Christina Koons, Adam Parrott, Lovel Pratt, Mike Ramsey, Karin Roemers-Kleven, Craig Smith, Kimbal Sundberg, Beth Tate, Joey Ullmann, Flora Vaught, Sandy Wyllie-Echeverria, Lola Walker

Ex-officio, County support staff and members of the public: Katherine Combs, Tristan Contesse, Jane Fuller, Marta Green, Russel Guerry, Katie Johnson, Kari Koski, Jason Lim, Wendy Loosle, Frances Robertson, Sam Whitridge

9:01 AM **Convene MRC Meeting** *Adam Parrott*

9:02 AM **Public Comment** *none*

9:03 AM **Approve meeting agenda** *All*
Added an update from Lovel, that can be part of updates/business before the presentation. Agenda is approved.

Approve MRC December retreat minutes *MRC Members*
Lovel abstains (hasn't reviewed). Dave Checkley moves to approve, Sandy seconds. All in favor. Minutes approves.

9:05 AM **Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Updates** *Christina Koons*
The 2026 calendar is out, available on the website, first meeting January 30 at Padilla Bay. The retreat is planned for April 2, same day as our meeting. Salish Sea Steward training is set and fully booked. Jessica who does outreach for the commission announced a campaign for no-anchor zones.
Adam: we could move our meeting to April 9
Christina: and reminder that I'll term out of the MRC by June, we should start planning for that
Frankie: that's a big oversight to schedule the retreat for the same day as our meeting, I think we should push back.
And on the eelgrass anchor out zone, we have been involved in those meetings and will continue to do so
Christina: I can raise those scheduling concerns at our executive committee meeting next week
Lovel: I'm disappointed that Christina will term out, how hard and fast a practice is that for advisory committees?
-more discussion of County regulations around this, Christina's critical role as NWSC rep, talk more with Sam offline

9:12 AM **MRC Updates/Business**
• 2026 MRC Work Plan *Sam Whitridge*
We need approval for this at start of every year, Sam shares spreadsheet. Tasks #1-5 are regular programmatic tasks funded through NWSC grant (DV, PFSS, etc.). Then, we have our one-time NOAA grant funding that will fund MSA community engagement for next two years. Annual salmon recovery grant round (ongoing but not funded through MRC), and then Task #7 is MRC advisory directive, staff support e.g. advising on the OPALCO tidal project -some discussion of how Task #7 differs from Operations, the important role this plays relative to other MRC's
Charles: we established a new subcommittee on finances and support –does that fall under this task?
Sam: I think so, putting things under task #1 can get them swept under the rug – task #7 has more emphasis
ACTION: Sam will add that to the document
Lovel: SJC will need to update Shoreline Master program by 2030. That can take years.
<https://www.sanjuancountywa.gov/578/Shoreline-Master-Program>
There may be other things like that coming up on schedule that may of interest for MRC to advise County,
<https://app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=90.58.080>
MOTION: David moves to approve the Work Plan, SWE seconds, all approve. Work Plan is approved.

Frankie: DCD is currently working on the Critical Areas update and then plan to start on the SMP update. As staff we are being looped in on these and asked for our input and review - a positive development. We will be sure to have DCD staff come to the MRC and present on the SMP update plan and ensure the MRC participates in this process.

9:25 AM • 2026 MRC Subcommittee Review

Sam Whitridge

This is an internal county requirement to report on activities for the past year. There's a template to complete, but we also want to use this to highlight certain aspects of the MRC, the marine program and ES to Council

Sam shares Advisory Committee Annual Report. There are a couple of small edits and comments.

Lovel: I saw that spill response preparedness wasn't in the Work Plan but still falls under advisory role, Task #7

MOTION: Charles moves to approve the report, Dave seconds. Approved.

Sam shares list of subcommittee membership for 2026, newer subcommittee Sustainable funding and Marine Vessels & Infrastructure. For those two and Oil Spill/ERTV we don't have a chair or MRC lead in place.

Lovel: this is such an important time for oil spill prevention, hope this upcoming rulemaking can help State prepare

ACTION: Flora wants to be added to PFSS, Christina wants to be added to Sustainable Funding, Craig Smith wants to be added to Marine Vessel and Infrastructure subcommittees

MOTION: Lovel moves to approve the subcommittee list, Charles seconds. Approved.

Frankie: I'm hoping to rope in a few of you (Craig, Charles) to review what is turning into a very technical final report, and eventual manuscript for the vessel assessment project. (Charles Bookman says yes; Craig too)

9:35 AM • Update on MRC Grants and Funding

Sam Whitridge

I mentioned the NOAA one-time grant that's being signed by the County now. The MRC programmatic grant has been signed. So, our funding for the current biennium is in place. I heard from Sasha at NW Straits that there may be some additional funding coming to MRC's, some NOAA funding from a previous grant cycle. More next month.

9:38 AM • Marine-related Legislation for ocean-going vessels

Lovel Pratt

I suggest we could discuss marine legislation that we want to encourage County Council to support. There is a legislation sponsored by Liz Lovellett and Debra Lekanoff that would require ocean-going ships to use low-sulfur fuels. Currently many of these ships use heavy fuel oil with scrubbers that continually dump byproducts into marine waters. It's an easy issue to address representing a cost increase to ship-owners. But the cost to the marine ecosystem and human health outweighs that. There was some material submitted in an email from Lovel;

<https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/?BillNumber=1652&Chamber=House&Year=2025>

<https://sanjuans.org/a-simple-solution-to-pollution/>

Charles: scrubbers dispose of removed particulates – is it constant or can they choose when/where to dispose of it?

Lovel: over 82% of scrubbers worldwide are open loop which means continuous use of seawater to scrub smokestacks and always discharging whenever motor running. The remaining scrubbers can 'toggle' between open and closed loop. Those have some level of 'bleed off' even when the loops are in closed mode. There was a rulemaking on federal scrubber regulations but many of WA state comments weren't addressed (Lovel provides examples).

One issue here is ocean acidification, and the discharge is highly acidic – higher than State would allow.

Frankie: I received an update on Canadian marine mammal regulations expected to come out this year, one was about closing use of open-loop scrubbers in SRKW waters. It would be nice if Washington's were the same.

Lovel: thanks for bringing that up. But Canada can regulate that. Here, WA can only pass legislation on the use of fuels

Karin: are there standards for where they scrub, and do cruise vessels also need to scrub?

Level: the Port of Seattle and cruise industry have an MOU with Ecology, they're not discharging scrubber wash water in most of WA waters, including around SJC but not including the Strait of Juan de Fuca. This is a temporary pause. The cruise industry funded their own study to assess impacts of their scrubbers. More information: https://sanjuans.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Low-Sulfur-Fuel-Legislation-White-Paper_12-9-2025.pdf; https://sanjuans.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/Flyer_HB1652_SB-5519.pdf

Kari: Kitsap proposed some legislative changes on the definitions of derelict and abandoned. We started discussing that in our DV subcommittee, Kitsap County legislative agenda to change definitions for derelict vessels RCW 79.100

9:53 AM • Update/discussion on OPALCO tidal energy project

Russell Guerry

We've been quiet about this since the comment period ended in October because nothing is happening until grant funds come through. We expect this to be pushed further into the future if it comes through, timing indeterminate. I'm open to questions and discussion. Now the entire project is paused; if funding gets allocated to OPALCO, the OPALCO board will decide if we continue. And if we continue, the multi-year process of making this a real project would continue. There's a lot more permitting to go forward, this is just step one of our application with FERC.

Charles: the letter that OPALCO sent to FERC (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission) had a specific date by which there would be a decision, what back and forth has there been with the granting agency since then?

Russell: Water Power Technologies Office (WPTO) is not allowed to communicate with us until they've made formal decision. It may not be until April 1st. It's a competitive process

Level: I read the comment letters from some of the tribes, curious if OPALCO is making adjustments in terms of consultation with tribes. It's been of interest to the MRC to ensure tribal engagement occurs

Russell: On our website and as part of the grant, we did early engagement with the tribes. When we restart the FERC process, now that comment period is closed, we'll go into a more formal process.

Please email if any further information is needed.

10:09 AM • **MRC subcommittee updates**

o Kelp Farming

Karin Roemers-Kleven

Messages from an organization called "Prepare SJI". It's about food security, and they're interested in kelp farming and consumption. They're meeting January 15th, in person on the grange at 5pm

<https://sanjuanislandsprepare.org/kelp/>

My concern is if it's harmful to the environment and how much effect a kelp farm could have in San Juan County?

Level: one concern is marine mammal entanglement in lines for kelp aquaculture projects. There was an example near Vashon Island where lines were lost

Joey: Lots of questions. For starters can we ensure commercial production of a single species or a range of species won't affect natural growth and distribution?

Frankie: I'll try to attend part of the meeting on the 15th

Kari: I'm planning to attend, if nothing else for some of the kelp nibbles and libations. I'll report back!

10:14 AM o Outreach & Education

Katie Johnson

ACTION: Katie will send out an email with some opportunities coming up

o Plastic Free Salish Sea

Katie Johnson

Save the date – April 18 for Great Islands Clean-up (GICU). Flora & Lola may set up a friendly island competition

o Seagrass Protection

Sam Whitridge

Olivia (not present at this meeting) will be the new lead here. We have a meeting to plan some outreach and engagement, particularly on Fourth of July beach. Staff will meet with Olivia later this month.

o Derelict Vessel Prevention

Adam Parrott/Kari Koski

We're meeting next month. Thanks everyone who did monitoring recently. Thanks, Charles, for looking at South end of Lopez. Talking to DNR about a turn-in event focused on nearshore and small boats that may be unregistered. Kitsap proposed legislative language changes, defining derelict and abandoned. The proposed change would allow not waiting a full 30 days before acting when an owner can't be found. Must ensure due process is still in place.

Jane: have you seen something in Governor's budget showing budget reduction for attention to derelict vessels?

Kari: I just spoke with DNR, and they made no indication of that. I'll investigate that and get back to you.

Jane: if this concerns work in this area, we should get more information from our state counterpart agency; if there is messaging we want to convey, that should be prepared for use during this legislative session.

Frankie: thank you, Jane. We can also follow up with our contacts at the NW Marine Trade Association and the Recreational Boaters Association of WA, as they would likely be key advocates for maintaining this funding.

o Oil Spill/ERTV

Sam Whitridge/Lovel Pratt

No further updates beyond what Lovel announced earlier, we still need a subcommittee lead.

Lovel: I posted in the chat earlier something that will be presented to the Whatcom County MRC. There's an appeal for the Liquid petroleum gas terminal in Ferndale. This application addresses 31 prior unpermitted projects, as well as two new projects in which impacts such as increased vessel traffic were misrepresented. This is just a heads-up that there'll be a combined conditional use permit application and an appeal of the determination of non-significance hearing that'll happen at the end of this month. If anyone is interested in testifying at the conditional use hearing, Lovel can provide more information; <https://sanjuans.org/environmental-coalition-appeals-whatcom-county-decision-for-expansions-at-ferndale-terminal/>

10:27 AM Committee member updates and any other business

none

11:25AM **Convene CAG Meeting**

11:26 AM **CAG Updates/Business**

Sam Whitridge

• 2026 Salmon Recovery Grant Round Planning and Timeline

Sam sent out the call for Letters of Intent. They're due Feb 13th. If projects are deemed to be a good fit, full proposals will be due April 15th. Site visits planned for April 29th and 30th (first Wednesday & Thursday of May won't work. We frequently skip May meeting in lieu of site visits, this year we can keep our regular meeting). It's not mandatory to attend site visits but it's extremely helpful.

It's a busy agenda this year, so I propose keeping our meeting in May in addition to late April site visits. The MRC in their role as the CAG will largely be involved in the summer.

Lastly, regarding funding, the question of how much funding will be available is unknown. Amounts are unknown but we're expecting SRFB plus PSAR funds with hopefully combined amount over a million dollars.

I'll forward proposals as we receive them.

11:31 PM **Adjourn CAG Meeting**

MRC, CAG and LIO Committee Members in Attendance: Paul Andersson, Charles Bookman, David Checkley, Kailey Genter, Rich Goodhart, Brian Goodremont, Christina Koons, Adam Parrott, Lovel Pratt, Mike Ramsey, Craig Smith, Kimbal Sundberg, Beth Tate, Joey Ullmann, Flora Vaught, Sandy Wyllie-Echeverria, Lola Walker

Ex-officio, County support staff and members of the public: Katherine Combs, Tristan Contesse, Jane Fuller, Marta Green, Russel Guerry, Katie Johnson, Kari Koski, Jason Lim, Wendy Loosle, Frances Robertson, Sam Whitridge

10:27 AM Convene LIO Meeting

10:20 AM Discussion with PSP Staff regarding Marine Program funding alternatives *Jason Lim, Tristan Contesse*

Sam: we have PSP staff here, let's refer to our discussion about sustainable funding for the MRC & marine program

Jason: we're following up on the issue of generating funding. We can provide a few updates and then discuss

Tristan: thanks all for the great forum back in August. Regarding the request for a white paper, one of our colleagues is working on a memo researching tourism tax etc. We're also working with Kendra to explore tweaks to existing revenue sources to help fund marine programs. Movement on any new or revised funding mechanism is unlikely in 2026 legislative session which starts next week. But with a longer time frame, like 2027 or beyond, we can update.

Let's go on to discuss the nearshore credit program and possible San Juan involvement,

<https://www.psp.wa.gov/pspsc.php>; <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/west-coast/habitat-conservation/puget-sound-nearshore-habitat-conservation-calculator>

This is a program we co-manage with NOAA. One way to assess projects that may be appropriate is to put them in the calculator (above link). We're interested in cultivating a project pipeline

Frankie: we worked with Ahren to make the Jackson beach project happen. That's a great example of how that money can be used. We'll continue to work with Ahren to identify other projects going forward

Joey: if any infographic could be created around that project and how PSP is involved, it would help someone like me who's working with clients on smaller buoy and shoreline projects to explain the impacts and how the funding works. Just a link I could send clients about what mitigation dollars go towards.

Frankie: seems like a bitter pill to swallow paying conservation credits – but it ultimately goes toward public good

Beth: it's helpful to know where the money goes. At WDFW we must directly link mitigation to a specific project.

ACTION: Jason says Joey's suggestion is great – PSP will work on that

Mike: DNR program staff may not be aware, should check with DNR Legislative liaison for their reaction. I thought these funds are from leasing revenue generated on aquatic lands. This would be a raid on their account.

Jane: I'm confused as to how conservation credits can offset costs for things like removing creosote pilings.

Concerning to consider how to use these funds for basic projects like maintaining hard infrastructure.

Frankie: Entities hold on to shoreline armoring or pilings because of the thought, 'we'll need those credits in the future'. The conservation credit has been around long enough that now it's part of project planning. The missing piece has been understanding how to take advantage of those mitigation dollars to fund projects locally, use conservation credit dollars to support shoreline recovery projects. Important to think of critical shoreline infrastructure we need to maintain – public docks and barge landing sites. Maritime trades are struggling. How do we combine doing the right thing for the shoreline and continue essential operations.

ACTION: Jason, Jane, Frankie and Beth find a time to discuss this more offline

Brian: We need to not only maintain existing infrastructure but update, modernize, expand infrastructure

Jane: there's a difference between public entities maintaining existing structures and building brand new. With maintenance and rehab, aim to improve for the environment. But high costs elicit negative reaction. Maybe could be better alignment of interests so there's less perceived competition?

Beth: the challenge of hoarding mitigation credits, no incentive for using them. There could be space to have an agreement with a public entity to bank credit internally for that entity, streamline that so that it's easier to do projects when the funding is available. Make it less coupled with time. This may be less useful for private entities.

Jason: Ahren and I have talked to various entities on that point, we can reengage on this with public entities to be more of a 'bank'. PSP already exists as one of the banks for projects to go forward

Frankie: we have key pieces we can pull into this; we did the county-wide creosote survey – we know exactly how much is there and where it is. same with eelgrass mapping

11:00 AM LIO Business agenda

Jason Lim

- PSP Updates

Still no update on the appointment of an executive director. All the following links also sent to members by Katie, The 2026-2030 comment period opened Jan 5, open until Feb 3rd, <https://psp.wa.gov/2026AAupdate.php>

Next Tuesday Jan 15 at 9am, coffee chat, https://events.zoom.us/j/AmKT7f1tGVp62qe5owkLmOmNyWH4WbjF4yLzLf23FsqqGk4c2wq~AppxRNDi3ROBPkn1yNwq6AVDjhLTOlgS954bqFq0iev10Mpn_9XGsey6w

Kick off meeting in next couple of weeks, stay tuned for more info on this

<https://pugetsoundestuary.wa.gov/2026/01/05/open-for-comment-marine-vegetation-implementation-strategy/>

- Update re: Healthy Shorelines Action Plan Funding

Frankie: to provide an update on the project that was selected, a group met in early December to discuss potential projects and landed on mooring buoys titled, "mooring matters – protecting in Eelgrass in San Juans"

This will be a conglomeration of work from marine patrols and documenting mooring buoys. It's been haphazard and non-funded but an emerging issue that needs to be addressed. Want to incorporate some work from Friends of SJ's. This will be a comprehensive assessment, include mapping and characterization, identify unpermitted buoys and investigate removal, etc. There will be an outreach/education component and a tribal engagement component.

Joey: Caution against interpreting 'neglect' from the surface of a buoy. All meaningful components are underwater

11:09 AM **Presentation: San Juan County On-site Sewage Systems (OSS) Project Update** Katherine Combs

Update on rebates for OSS inspections – the grant allowed us to increase the rebate amount to \$350. We've awarded 11 updates so far. Also made some updates to our permitting software, allowing updates to mapping and inventory of OSS. For Community Outreach, we've sent out inspection reminder postcards initially to all properties in the County (excluded those with already submitted inspections). We will send out a total of over 6K in batches, already mailed out 4k and continuing. In future, plan to separate mailing lists according to system type and frequency of required inspection. We have been hearing from homeowners asking about scheduling inspections. For program information, we're planning more rebate promotion. Katherine shares an image of the postcard In conclusion, please spread the word about O & M (Operation & Maintenance) rebate application Craft3 is a low interest loan option and there are FAQ's on the County website.

Level: is mapping /inventory correlated with Sea Level Rise (SLR)?

Katherine: we keep an inventory of known OSS, my role has been to update and cross reference it with inspections

Level: but any priority to shoreline systems and areas where SLR is an issue? can we prioritize that more?

Katie: There is funding within this project for some targeted outreach/prioritizations to those groups. We will get under contract in 2026 to pursue this further

Frankie: we have updated SLR maps, we can collaborate

Paul: Dept. of Ecology Clean Water grants funded the program at Clark Conservation District. There is more the County/CD can do along these lines to promote/subsidize healthy septic systems <https://poopsmartclark.org/>

Kim: What's the compliance rate with existing OSS and O & M? Can that increase, particularly in shoreline areas?

Katherine: absolutely, that's the goal. We reinstated sending out these postcards

Kim: what would the health dept. think is a healthy compliance rate?

Katherine: our goal is to keep increasing it, but it's starting at around 20%

Kim: glad you're collecting data. I'd like to see compliance area in the shoreline areas up around 90%.

Katherine: typically, shoreline areas are higher than 20%, roughly up to 40% compliance depending on the area

Level: Perhaps this is something the MRC can advise the SJC Council on. It sounds like we need a more robust OSS program, particularly for shoreline septic systems

Paul: there's a big niche to fill in terms of County outreach and compliance. Clark County CD has some good information about this. Our CD hasn't historically played a role in O & M, but I think we could. There was a Clean Water grant that we missed –more potential we could tap

Katherine: we have a new environmental health manager now, Jessica Nye, who you could talk to

11:25AM **Adjourn LIO Meeting**