



SAN JUAN COUNTY
Marine Resources
Committee



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

Thursday, February 5th, 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 January meeting minutes – MRC Members
9:15 AM	Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Updates- Christina Koons
9:20 AM	Presentation: San Juan County Benthic Habitat Mapping Project- Emily Roland, Western WA University and Gary Greene, San Jose State University
9:55 AM	MRC Updates/Business • 2026 MRC Council Liaison to MRC- <i>Sam Whitridge</i> • 2026 MRC Membership Planning- <i>Sam Whitridge</i> • MRC Subcommittee Meeting Scheduling-<i>Sam Whitridge</i> • MRC April meeting reschedule- <i>Sam Whitridge</i> • OPALCO tidal energy project update- <i>Russell Guerry</i> • Report on Jan 15th Kelp Aquaculture event-<i>Karin Roemers-Kleven</i> • Update MRC grant for outreach related to MSA/Kelp and Eelgrass- <i>Sam Whitridge</i> • Updates on 2026 Legislative Session/bills to monitor-<i>All</i> ○ DV Legislation ○ Mosquito Fleet Bill

	○ Others ● MRC subcommittee updates ○ Outreach & Education- <i>Katie Johnson</i> ○ Plastic Free Salish Sea- <i>Karin Roemers-Kleven/Katie Johnson</i> ○ Seagrass Protection- <i>Olivia Graham/Katie Johnson</i> ○ Derelict Vessel Prevention- <i>Adam Parrott/Kari Koski</i> ○ Oil Spill/ERTV-<i>Sam Whitridge/Charles Bookman</i>
10:55 AM	Committee member updates and any other business
11:00 AM	Adjourn MRC Meeting Convene LIO Meeting
11:00 AM	LIO Business agenda- <i>Jason Lim/Katie Johnson</i> ● PSP Updates ● Puget Sound Action Agenda Commitments ● LIO Action Plan Priority for 2026
11:30 AM	Adjourn LIO Meeting Convene CAG Meeting
11:30 AM	CAG Updates/Business- <i>Sam Whitridge</i> ● Update on Jackson Beach Project ● 2026 Salmon Recovery Grant Round Updates
12:00 PM	Adjourn CAG Meeting

MRC, CAG and LIO Committee Members in Attendance: Matt Arata, Charles Bookman, David Checkley, Rich Goodhart, Brian Goodremont, Kailey Genter, Olivia Graham, Christina Koons, Lovel Pratt, Mike Ramsey, Karin Roemers-Kleven, Beth Tate, Flora Vaught, Sandy Wyllie-Echeverria, Lola Walker

Ex-officio, County support staff and members of the public: Jack Bell, Paul Cline, Audrey Coyne, Katherine Combs, Sara Da Silva, Gregg Dunphy, Marta Green, Gary Greene, Russel Guerri, Sasha Horst, Katie Johnson, Latacha Johnson, Kari Koski, Jason Lim, Bridget Moran, Jessica Nye, Dana Oster, Frances Robertson, Emily Roland, Craig Smith, Kendra Smith, Heather Spore, Sam Whitridge, Jeff Whitty

9:00 AM **Convene MRC Meeting**

Karin Roemers-Kleven

9:01 AM **Public Comment**

9:02 AM **Approve meeting agenda**

All

Question: shall we discuss the funding opportunity Sam emailed about? i.e. projects that could use that funding
Sam: yes, let's add that into Kelp & Eelgrass; the funding is attached to that. The agenda is approved.

Approve MRC January meeting minutes

MRC Members

Lovel sent in a couple of minor edits to language, we'll make sure those are included in the final draft.
Dave moves to approve the minutes (with those edits included), Christina seconds; all in favor, minutes approved

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

Christina Koons

Met last week at Padilla Bay and welcomed two new MRC reps from Jefferson and Snohomish County. The NW Straits Commission staff has a distribution list about their meetings; contact Caitlin at info@nwstraits.org if you want to receive those emails. We heard a presentation about the 'Kids on the Beach' program, see Skagit MRC website for more information. And a presentation about the Samish Dept. of Natural Resources work. We discussed HB219 and other legislation around vessels. The PSP action agenda is available on their website.

Puget Sound Day on the Hill will be the week of April 13th, more information available as it gets closer. Contact Lucas Hart with any questions about that, anyone is welcome to participate and receive negotiated discounts on hotels.

April 27th – Island County is hosting a workshop about forage fish at the Cornet Bay Retreat Center

Karin: reminder that Christina's term is up later this year, and we'll need a new rep for the NWSC, please consider

9:11 AM **Presentation: San Juan County Benthic Habitat Mapping Project** *Emily Roland and Gary Greene*

Emily and Gary presenting some data today funded by MRC (shares screen). There has been seafloor mapping throughout the archipelago, but without significant detail in shallow zones with habitat areas for critical various species and also sought out by recreational and other boaters. Showing habitat map of Lopez Sound. We want to link what we know about shorelines to shallow subtidal zones.

Kendra: this is great GIS-based data, how can we get access to these data? the GIS files, not just the static map

Emily: this is your (the MRC's) data. If there are small technical barriers let's work on that together.

Gary: we can get that to you for the habitat and substrate layers in GIS formats

ACTION ITEM: Kendra and Emily will connect and work on transferring GIS data

Emily: in 2024, our group received funding from the MRC to focus on certain target areas. We were approved by Council to work on mapping efforts using a multibeam sonar, specifically to fill in the western Lopez Sound area, map benthic habitats, derelict fishing gear and other signs of human activity, environmentally important properties

Multibeam sonar data has been useful for eelgrass meadows. Interested in dynamic bedforms and sediment deposition. We wanted a multibeam echo system that would be capable of showing these habitat and sediment features in 0-80' depth. Emily describes the new Shallow water multibeam bathymetry sonar technology and the many types of student involvement with this project and data collection, they learn to characterize benthic habitats

Emily describes map with colors signifying morphology and substrate. Tidal scour and cable crossings are evident. visualize eelgrass –density, patchy distribution, etc. Backscatter shows changes in seafloor morphology/substrate. Ground truth with sediment sampling and grain size analysis. Coarser material in areas with high tidal action - Gary discusses how tidal flow shapes sediment deposition. Image from the south part of Lopez Sound shows bedrock, different layers in geologic time. Raises question about the source of deposition – that may have been a volcanic cone. Need samples to confirm hypothesis that this is a remnant volcano and source of volcanic rock.

Zoom out map to show a couple other areas – Spencer spit, shows subtidal zones with eelgrass, sand/mud flats, scour, etc. Black specs on backscatter map may be crab pots - anthropogenic features. anchor scour vs. tidal scour

QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION:

-discussion of detecting anthropogenic effects versus natural types of scour. And how to better verify presence of crab pots.... More discussion of specific sites; use of ROV/splash cam. Discussion of debris removal options.

Olivia: my team is also looking at spatiotemporal changes in eelgrass beds and working with DNR. how to have more ongoing conversations between these teams and how much are we coming to the same conclusion?

ACTION: Olivia will follow up and connect with Emily following the meeting to work together and share information

10:19 AM **MRC Updates/Business**

- 2026 MRC Council Liaison to MRC

Sam Whitridge

Our new Council liaison will be Kari McVeigh. Jane Fuller will stay engaged with the marine program with the Ecosystem Coordination Board and Salmon Recovery work. All of Council are in Olympia today talking to legislators

- 2026 MRC Membership Planning

Sam Whitridge

We'll have a couple vacancies in the late Spring. Christina and Dave Checkley will both be stepping down.

We'll put out an announcement for applications with plans to conduct interviews in the spring.

- MRC Subcommittee Meeting Scheduling

Sam Whitridge

I sent out the roster for these subcommittees. Subcommittee leads - please start scheduling meetings

- MRC April meeting reschedule

Sam Whitridge

Can we reschedule this to April 9th? (April 2nd is also the date of the NW Straits Commission retreat) Lovel can't.

Charles: April 29-30th are salmon recovery site visits, is that in addition to monthly meetings?

Sam: yes. In the past site visits have occurred in lieu of but we weren't able to schedule them in first week of May.

- OPALCO tidal energy project update

Russell Guerry

We filed for an abeyance. That'll continue until July 1st, based on stalled funding. We don't know yet if the funding for these competitive tidal projects will continue; progress is funding-dependent so we are on hold now. If it isn't funded, we won't have a project. If we are selected for continued funding, then it will be a decision or the Board

- Report on Jan 15th Kelp Aquaculture event

Karin Roemers-Kleven

Kari: I went. It was a well attended grange function, standing room only, lots of enthusiasm. Great presentation

from Mermaid botanicals from Waldron, tasting from Rolling Sushi of non-local commercial seaweeds, and then a movie. But no time for discussion following the film. It's a topic in the resilience program we should stay attuned to

Karin: should we have a subcommittee focused on that?

Kari: we've had presentations before from different seaweed aquaculture

Sam: I'd prefer to wrap it into the existing kelp subcommittee

Jeff Whitty: there's a Seaweed Collaborative, a kelp aquaculture focused workgroup led by Meg Chadsey Feb 13. Please reach out if you're interested in attending; Karin, Kari and Flora all want to be connected to the facilitator

10:31 AM • Update MRC grant for outreach related to MSA/Kelp and Eelgrass

Sam Whitridge

About the NOAA funding for MSA outreach and eelgrass project, this also relates to the \$20K for which I sent out requests for proposals. This is NOAA money leftover from MRC spending and would be added onto the same contract we already have in place for that MSA outreach effort. The update is that contract is currently on hold at Prosecuting Attorney's office for SJC – there's a reference in the agreement to executive order 14, ending 'illegal discrimination' if a sponsee will be doing work involving DEI. Dept. of Ecology agreed last summer to accept this work. There are concerns; If not signed, we won't get the funding. The other six MRC's signed similar agreements.

Kendra: This could come up as an issue with other agreements with similar language. And we're looking at other options – could a nonprofit take on this work so the resources aren't lost?

Sam: if we don't know if we're going to get this money, should we postpone this discussion to March?

Kari: but if we do get the green light, we should have something ready/in mind

Karin: should we have a special meeting/offline discussion for anyone interested in pitching certain projects?

Sam: that's a good idea, and we may find out fairly soon in the next week or two.

ACTION: schedule a special meeting to discuss this in next week or two with anyone with a special project in mind

Olivia: who will be coordinating that meeting and who should we reach out to with ideas?

Sam: I'll lead the effort in putting together a proposal for that, I'll need input from the MRC

Olivia: I'd like to chime in on that, but I'll be at the Ocean sciences meeting from mid-Feb to early March.

Karin: let's prioritize and do that before you leave, i.e. before mid-February

10:43 AM • MRC subcommittee updates

o Outreach & Education

Katie Johnson

Some upcoming activities, it would be great to get more folks involved

o Plastic Free Salish Sea

Karin Roemers-Klaven/Katie Johnson

We'll talk more soon about GICU (Great Islands Clean Up) coming up this Spring

o Seagrass Protection

Olivia Graham

Eelgrass stressors project is moving along, big field blitz in March with diving and sensor swap-out. We also had an initial discussion about eelgrass outreach initiative using NOAA funding, we've met and we're working on some action items ahead of our next meeting Feb. 17th (but I'd like to move that meeting time up earlier, if possible)

ACTION: Frankie will get Olivia the vessel data sheets and do some quick counts at the HSIL study sites

o Derelict Vessel Prevention

Kari Koski

We've been doing some outreach at Yacht clubs about eelgrass anchor out areas, etc. Also question of whether to have another turn-in event this spring? and about small, unregistered vessels i.e. kayaks/dinghies not covered by DNR funding. That's one possibility for that \$20k. and we're interested in other derelict debris

Charles: thanks for bringing up debris topic, I also think that's a candidate for that \$20k

o Oil Spill/ERTV

Charles Bookman

The State Dept of Ecology are embarking on a rule making on oil spill response. it'll be a 2-year process. One topic to update is called 'shoreline cleanup assessment techniques'. And, as Sam suggested, the subcommittee should meet to talk about other work items, ERTV, etc. so I'll be setting that up in next few weeks.

10:50 AM Committee member updates and any other business

Lovel: I'm interested to know this committee's recommendation on the derelict vessels bill HB 2199 to reduce the amount of time to wait before addressing abandoned vessels. It passed out of the policy committee by deadline. Some discussion – there's support for the bill. Kari thinks we should ask for Council support. Lovel reviews pathway for the bill, there will be a chance for the County to sign on approval if the MRC thinks that's a good idea.

Christina: external relations committee through NW Straits is actively following this, i.e. Lucas Hart.

Dana: DNR supports the bill WITH the addition of their amendment to it.

Flora: the FH Eco club is going to Olympia later this month, Feb 24th, we'd like to know what bills we should be talking to legislators about or if you have any advice?

ACTION: please send information on bills we're tracking to Flora through Katie Fleming.

Lovel: PFSS may want to investigate some bills like the bottle and plastic bag bill.

Katie: thanks, Lovel, they're on the list!

Frankie highly recommends the IOSA workshop next week. Beth is attending, <https://www.iosaonline.org/training>

10:56 AM Adjourn MRC Meeting

11:09 AM Convene CAG Meeting

11:09 AM CAG Updates/Business

Sam Whitridge

- Update on Jackson Beach Project

This project was originally funded with salmon recovery dollars, but Council has decided to not move forward with it due to a desire to preserve the barge landing and concerns that restoration would disrupt that use.

There was a revetment that was recently re-armored by Public Works under an unauthorized permit. That's unfortunate but we hope to take another run at it; if that property changes hands, the Port has expressed interest in working with us.

- Environmental policy manager for the Swinomish just heard about this. It's a much-needed habitat restoration on a degraded shoreline. The Tribe has concerns about the County Council choosing to reject this and in-turn approving more hard armor. Swinomish is tracking this closely; the Tribe is concerned about impacts to forage fish habitat and ultimately habitat important for salmon. There may be an opportunity for education here in terms of Tribal treaty rights and the type of consultation that's needed. We may provide our own letter and we'll share that with the MRC.

- Habitat Protection Ecologist with Skagit River System Cooperative: this is an inexcusable lack of tribal consultation.

- WDFW regulator involved in authorization for this project hated the idea of re-armoring this shoreline when this restoration was all permitted and ready to go but had no grounds to turn it down. Disappointed in the decision. Part of the problem is that they're using a permit pathway that circumnavigates the public comment period.

MRC members: we've learned what happened by an action of the Council and weren't consulted; isn't this the MRC's role in terms of advice/discussion? Something isn't working. The County has designated a liaison to the MRC – for whatever reason there was no communication about this Council decision taken on Jan 20th. At a minimum the gist of this decision needs to be communicated to our Council liaison, it's unfortunate they're not in this meeting.

NOTE: we anticipated close to \$500K. We had switched out funding for this from Salmon Recovery to PSP mitigation credit. Part of that total cost was for the power pole removal and OPALCO has sent us that bill for \$100K.

- How does OPALCO feel about this? it was on the front page of their newsletter, they moved power poles for this
- Concern about the County being able to secure grant funding for future restoration projects given what happened here. It's a surprise and a concerning outcome, we've been talking about this as a salmon recovery project for years

QUESTION – can we reverse this decision with a letter? It could be very brief and address the process as inappropriate.

This is in the CIP and will need to be removed at the first budget amendment in March. There's opportunity to discuss

ACTION: MRC requests that Kendra put together a timeline of information, i.e. a simple list of pertinent dates

- Karin will write the letter, Christina, Dave, Sandy, Kailey, and Lovel agree to help

The ask is that we demand this project be completed. The money was already there (and in such a difficult funding time). We also ask that the decision be revisited and discussed properly, and not have decisions made without due process.

-there's video from April 15-16, 2024 of the initial public debate and the direction provided from Council that required a public process for master-planning that site. Prior to that there was full approval from Council; that was the first 'stopping point' at which we were asked to do some alternatives-analysis. We produced a full restoration plan for this site with alternatives for the barge landing. The alternatives analysis developed in 2025 was expected to go to public consultation, but that didn't happen by internal direction, and they proceeded with what Public Works thought was necessary. video from this last meeting January 20th

<https://sanjuancowa.portal.civicclerk.com/event/3849/media> ; (begins around 51:00)

- proposed timing is to aim for the Council meeting on the 2nd and 3rd of March

ACTION: Kendra can send letter-writing group background information; that's all in PRISM

ACTION: Gregg Dunphy, Lummi Natural Resources Department Environmental Policy Analyst asks to please send them detailed information about the restoration project ASAP. Their email is: GreggD@lummi-nsn.gov. Staff will follow up.

ACTION: Karin will be in touch soon with Sam and Katie and then contact the people who volunteered to help

11:54 • 2026 Salmon Recovery Grant Round Updates

Grant round is underway; Letters of Intent due Feb 13th, Sam will share with MRC so you can track the 2026 projects

11:55 AM Adjourn CAG Meeting

February 5, 2026

MRC and CAG Meeting Minutes

MRC, CAG and LIO Committee Members in Attendance: Matt Arata, Charles Bookman, David Checkley, Rich Goodhart, Brian Goodremont, Olivia Graham, Christina Koons, Lovel Pratt, Mike Ramsey, Karin Roemers-Kleven, Beth Tate, Sandy Wyllie-Echeverria, Lola Walker

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10:57 AM **Convene LIO Meeting**

11:00 AM **LIO Business agenda-**

Jason Lim/Katie Johnson

- PSP Updates

The Habitat SIL is hosting an award summit on March 25th in Auburn WA

Jason: a candidate has been picked for executive director, don't know yet who they are or when they start

10:58 AM • **Puget Sound Action Agenda Commitments**

Katie Johnson

With the 2026-2030 action agenda, the partnership is gathering commitments entities are making. The PSP wants LIO's to develop a list of 1-5 commitments for between now and 2030. One way we could participate is to discuss some of our ongoing work we've already decided to do including the OSS action plan, something within the healthy shorelines action plan work, and other things LIO helps fund like DV (derelict vessel) prevention.

Any feedback? We'll discuss this more at a future meeting

- **LIO Action Plan Priority for 2026**

Katie: one more thing, the planning effort for the floodplains action plan doesn't apply in the SJI's because it's not a habitat we have here. We had a meeting to discuss this in September and identified three priorities of which floodplains/estuaries was one. If not doing floodplains, which other topic(s) do we want to prioritize?

- Vessel impacts and/or marine vegetation

There isn't an implementation strategy yet for vessel impacts, there is one for marine vegetation

Lovel: I'll add that there's a new vessel impacts action in the draft for 2026-2030 and it addresses issues from scrubber discharge. This topic is apropos because of expansion of the oil pipeline in Canada and tanker traffic in our water ways, it's an increased thread we may want to focus on.

Katie: the vessel impacts includes oil spill prevention as well as recreational vessel management and a lot of things we've been working on for a while. I'd recommend steering that way because while Marine vegetation is important, it's covered by another action agenda.

Kendra: does anyone oppose focusing on vessel impact?

MOTION: to approve Vessel impacts as our next action plan priority? All in favor, none opposed

11:08AM **Adjourn LIO Meeting**