

San Juan County

**MARINE
RESOURCES
COMMITTEE**

**2009
Annual
Report**



The San Juan Marine Resources Committee (MRC) was started in 1996 as a grassroots effort to establish local management of marine resources. The MRCs are supported by federal funding through the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative and nationally recognized as an innovative approach for bringing marine science and policy to communities through grass-roots citizen involvement.

During the course of 2009, seventeen citizens served on the San Juan MRC, contributing over 2,000 hours of work to protect marine resources. Representatives from the Port of Friday Harbor, commercial and recreational fishing, the University of Washington's Friday Harbor Labs, local businesses, environmental organizations, long-term residents, San Juan County and Tribal governments bring a diversity of perspectives and expertise to the MRC. *MRC members and staff are listed on the back cover.*

Message from
the Chair
Page 1

Outreach
Fostering a
Stewardship Ethic
Page 2

Science
Assessing Marine
Health
Page 3

Policy
Improving
Management of
Marine Resources
Page 4

Integration
Supporting Local
and Regional
Marine Resource
Initiatives
Page 5

Finance Report
Page 6

Message from the Chair

Despite reduced funding, 2009 was an eventful and productive year for the Marine Resources Committee. We accomplished the majority of our objectives, advancing the implementation of the Marine Stewardship Area plan. The MRC's oldest project took a new direction based on the results of research we commissioned to evaluate the effectiveness of our volunteer bottomfish recovery zones. We continued effective partnerships with local businesses to reduce contaminants entering the marine ecosystem via surface water runoff and helped provide technical support to landowners and county staff in protecting the marine environment. We participated on the citizens' committee advising the county on the critical area ordinance update.

We were also involved in several issues not anticipated in our annual work plan. Responding to concerns about crab fishery management, we invited a state Department of Fish and Wildlife representative to explain management and answer questions at one MRC meeting and two community meetings, all well attended. When the federal government announced a proposed rule limiting vessel operations to protect orca whales, we invited community members to express their thoughts and concerns at an MRC meeting. Based largely on this input, we provided the council with a briefing report on the proposed rule, which they used to inform their own comments. Two of our members served on the steering committee appointed by the council to set up a local organization to provide advice and leadership toward implementing the Puget Sound Partnership's Action Agenda.

We are proud that San Juan MRC member Jonathan White served as chair of the Northwest Straits Commission this year.

The dedication, enthusiasm, and skills that MRC members, our staff, and our community partners bring to this important work always amazes me. I feel very fortunate for the opportunity to work with all of them.



Kit Rawson
San Juan MRC Chair

To successfully move forward with the protection and restoration of marine resources, there must be public support. When people possess a stewardship ethic informed by an understanding of problems and potential solutions, they will take direct action to protect the environment and support sensible regulations and programs that benefit marine resources. The MRC continues to nurture that stewardship ethic in our local citizens.

The MRC was an active participant in [Sustainable San Juans](#), a three-day event in April with celebrations, displays, awards, workshops and field trips on greening your home, food and business. An idea from the MRC Outreach Subcommittee came to fruition with the “Green Tent” at the San Juan County Fair, which highlighted the work of a dozen groups and agencies that work to protect and restore the environment. Two workshops on [crab fishery management](#) brought out big crowds on San Juan and Lopez Islands. By mounting a fund raising campaign, we were able to once again reach 650,000 sportspeople with a Marine Stewardship Area advertisement in the [WDFW Sport Fishing Guide](#). In June, we reached a widening group with our [Stewardship Connections](#) Newsletter.



To support the availability of high quality technical assistance for landowners, the MRC provided funding and direction to train local professionals through the [WSU Master Gardener Sustainable Landscaper Course](#), [Skagit Valley College's Erosion and Sediment Control Lead Certification Program](#), an [American Society of Civil Engineers Low Impact Development Clinic](#) and the [Friends of the San Juans Water in San Juan County Workshop for Real Estate Professionals](#).



In 2009 the MRC developed a display and companion brochure on the history and present use of the Marine Stewardship Area and strategies for protecting our marine resources for the future.

Businesses have a key role to play in protecting marine water quality, by direct action to reduce pollution and as role models for local citizens. The [San Juan County Pollution Prevention Program](#), supported by a grant obtained through the efforts of the MRC, has been a valuable resource for local businesses and the public through [technical site visits](#), [nine newspaper articles](#), an array of [technical and informational fact sheets](#), and [door-to-door outreach on reducing pollutants in stormwater](#). During the fall of 2009, the [Pollution Prevention Specialist](#) completed 122 consultations with business owners to provide guidance toward reducing pollution in stormwater. Understanding the power of leading by example, an effort has been recently launched to “green” [San Juan County operations](#) in all departments by improving energy efficiency and conservation of natural resources.

2009

Outreach Projects

Public Events

*Sustainable San Juans
County Fair “Green Tent”*

Public Meetings

*Crab Fisheries Management
NOAA Draft Whale Rule*

Technical Training

*Sustainable Landscaping
CESCL Lead Certification
Low Impact Development
Water in San Juan County*

Displays & Publications

*MSA Display & Brochure
Stewardship Connections*

Pollution Prevention Program

To both effectively understand the problems facing the marine environment and to accurately measure the effects of our protection and restoration efforts, we must have appropriate scientific monitoring of present conditions. Effective monitoring is meticulous, expensive and targeted to provide useful data. The MRC both directly commissions research and helps support the local research with the potential for providing this useful data.

The MSA monitoring plan is a work in progress which this year underwent revision based on peer review by leading scientists in the region.

To assist with a report on desalination plants and making recommendations for the update of the water element of the county's comprehensive plan, Richard Strathmann of the MRC reviewed extensive local and global data on the effects of **desalination** plants on the marine environment.

To assist with ongoing research on the effects of toxic compounds in stormwater and sediments, the MRC funded the purchase of an **Abratox™ testing system** utilized by the research organization Kwiaht to monitor the health of aquatic systems.



The MRC commissioned a study on the **efficacy of voluntary marine reserves for recovering bottomfish**. The study, conducted by SeaDoc Society scientists, collected data on bottomfish in local



Janna Nichols Photo

voluntary marine reserves and reference areas to assist in testing the efficacy of the reserves. The conclusions were that poor voluntary compliance combined with limited reserve size contributed to the

reserves being ineffective at protecting and restoring rockfish populations. This study is helping to inform local and regional efforts to rebuild rockfish populations.

The MRC reviewed and compiled the **best available science** for the County's Critical Areas Ordinance Update process.

2009 Science Projects

MSA Monitoring Plan

Water Quality

Desalination Plant Research

Abratox testing system

for Local Research

Rockfish

*Efficacy of Voluntary Reserves
for Recovering Bottomfish*

Best Available Marine
Science for the Critical
Areas Ordinance Update

A central role of the MRC is to advise the San Juan County Council on issues that affect local marine resources. We also provide advice and information about local issues to inform other local and regional agencies and processes. To perform this role effectively, we are informed by the goals of the Marine Stewardship area and sound science. As our advice is developed we actively seek a range of public opinion and the local knowledge of those who know and utilize the resources.

Members of the MRC participated on the County Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO) Citizens Review Committee. Following the committee process we also developed and submitted detailed recommendations for protecting nearshore and upland critical areas.

The MRC performed extensive research on the effects of desalination plants and worked closely with the County Water Resources Committee to develop the update to the water section of the County's Comprehensive Plan.

The MRC provided a detailed verbal, written and illustrated report to the County Council along with our recommended comments on NOAA's proposed vessel rule to protect killer whales.

2009 Advisory Areas

Critical Areas Ordinance
Update

Water Resources

NOAA's Proposed Vessel
Rule to Protect Whales

Puget Sound Rockfish
Advisory Group



Slide from the MRC's Report and Recommendations on NOAA's Proposed Vessel Rule to Protect Puget Sound Killer Whales

The marine areas around the San Juan Islands contain the majority of the rockfish habitat in the Puget Sound. Utilizing local research and the informed opinions of local fishers and others, the MRC developed policy recommendations for protecting and restoring local rockfish populations. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife



(WDFW) is in the process of developing a conservation plan for rockfish in the Puget Sound. The MRC is participating in the new Puget Sound rockfish advisory group that is responsible for providing guidance on the development of the final conservation plan.

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The marine waters of the San Juan Islands are clearly part of a significantly larger ecosystem, and what happens in other parts of the Salish Sea and in freshwater systems in the region affect our marine habitat, and vice versa. Just ask any salmon. In order to protect and restore our local marine resources we must work effectively with organizations and agencies in the region on both sides of the border.

The San Juan County MRC is but one of seven MRC's in counties surrounding Puget Sound, who's work complements the efforts of existing authorities to address the many serious threats to the region's waters. The Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) provides guidance and offers resources to the MRCs with the goal of mobilizing science to focus on key priorities and coordinating regional priorities for the Northwest Straits ecosystem. Our MRC works closely with the NWSC on many

issues and we are honored that one of our members, Jonathan White, is the Chair of the NWSC.

The MRC encouraged collaborative stewardship by hosting the well-attended fifth annual *Marine Managers Workshop* bringing together local, academic, state, federal and tribal groups that have management responsibilities



Councilors Fralick and Mhyr at the Workshop

The *San Juan Initiative* completed its tenure in 2009 but proved to be an effective organization that engaged key sectors of the public as well as county government in a process that is leading toward effective voluntary and regulatory methods to protect the marine environment. The MRC was well represented on the Initiative's Policy Group and upon the Initiative's sunset, committed to build on the Initiative's successes.



A *Local Integrating Organization (LIO)* is currently being formed to advise the Puget Sound partnership (PSP) on local priorities in the Action Agenda and take a leadership role for Action Agenda integration and implementation. The MRC has taken an active role on the steering committee set up to develop a structure and select members of the LIO and will be well represented on the LIO once it is active.

2009

Integration

Northwest Straits
Commission

*MRC Member Jonathan
White
named NWS Chair*

Marine Managers
Workshop
Adaptive Management

San Juan Initiative
Building on Successes

PSP Local Integrating
Organization
Selection Committee

The MRC evaluated projects for the 2009 Salmon Recovery Board grant round allocating \$1.4 million for eight projects.

The MRC participated on the state's Marine Protected Area work group to develop a report to the legislature with recommendations on how to improve coordination of marine protected areas in the state. The San Juan Marine Stewardship Area was recognized as a model for ecosystem management in that report.



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2009 Integration (continued)

Salmon Recovery Project
Rankings

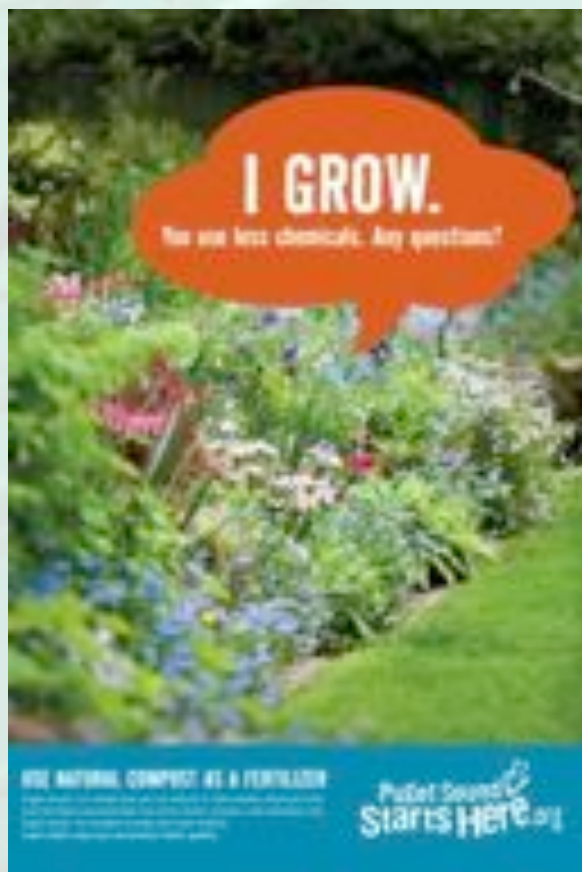
Marine Protected Area
Work Group

Critical Areas Ordinance
Outreach Support

ECONetwork
Puget Sound Starts Here

The MRC provided staff time and paid expenses for a portion of the **Critical Areas Ordinance outreach work** performed by San Juan Initiative staff members in late 2009.

The Puget Sound Partnership (PSP) selected the San Juan County MRC to be the coordinating entity for the local **Education, Communication and Outreach Network (San Juan ECONet)**, a subset of the local Stewardship Network of the San Juans. The ECONetwork group will work closely with the new San Juan LIO and the PSP's ECONet staff to provide effective outreach to support local and regional efforts to implement the Puget Sound Action Agenda.



One of the Posters from the *Puget Sound Starts Here* campaign.

2009
San Juan County
Marine Resources Committee

Laura Arnold	Planning Consultant / Friday Harbor Planning Commission / Artist <i>San Juan Island</i>
Lynn Danaher	President, Pacific Islands Research Institute / Owner, Archipelago Properties <i>San Juan Island</i>
Michael Durland	Marina Owner-Operator / Captain / Recreational Boater <i>Orcas Island</i>
Jack Giard	Commercial Fisherman / Member Pacific Salmon Commission / President of the Washington Reefnet Owner's Association <i>Lopez Island</i>
Andy Holman	Outdoorsman and Conservationist / Founding Member of the Puget Sound Anglers SJI Chapter / Coastal Conservation Association <i>San Juan Island</i>
Johannes Krieger	Owner - Crystal Seas Kayaking / Volunteer in Local Schools <i>San Juan Island</i>
David Loyd	Water Freight Service Operator / Teacher / Sustenance Fisherman <i>Waldron Island</i>
Barbara Marrett	Port of Friday Harbor Commissioner / Captain / Recreational Boater <i>San Juan Island</i>
Mary Masters	Retired Environmental Engineer / Wildlife Researcher / Sea Kayaker <i>Orcas Island</i>
Kit Rawson	Fisheries Biologist / Tribal Representative / Puget Sound Recovery Implementation Technical Team <i>San Juan Island</i>
Pete Rose	San Juan County Administrator <i>San Juan Island</i>
Steve Revella	Recreational Fisherman / Member, San Juan Islands Chapter of the Puget Sound Anglers <i>San Juan Island</i>
Ken Sebens	Director of the Friday Harbor Marine Labs / Marine Biologist / Professor <i>San Juan Island</i>
Jim Slocomb	Recreational Boater / GIS Mapping Specialist / Marine Mechanic <i>San Juan Island</i>
Richard Strathmann	Marine Biologist / Professor - Friday Harbor Marine Labs <i>San Juan Island</i>
Jonathan White	Custom Home Builder / Author / Captain <i>Orcas Island</i>
Tina Whitman	Forage Fish Specialist / Staff Scientist for the Friends of the San Juans <i>Orcas Island</i>

2009 Marine Resources Committee Staff

Mary Knackstedt	San Juan County Marine Resources Committee Coordinator <i>Lopez Island</i>
Barbara Rosenkotter	San Juan County Salmon Recovery Lead Entity Coordinator <i>Orcas Island</i>
Brian Rader	San Juan County Pollution Prevention Specialist <i>San Juan Island</i>
Jeff Hanson	Outreach Coordinator <i>Orcas Island</i>
Helen Venada	Minute Taker <i>San Juan Island</i>



San Juan County Marine Resources Committee

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