



**SAN JUAN COUNTY  
MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE &  
CITIZEN'S SALMON ADVISORY GROUP**

Thursday, September 3rd, 2020

8:30 AM-10:30 AM

CAG Meeting 10:30 AM – 11:00 AM

Virtual Meeting via Zoom,

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Meeting ID: 867 7767 9651

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## Agenda

8:30 AM	<b>Convene Meeting Christina Koons, Chair</b> <b>Coast Salish Acknowledgement</b> <i>Let us acknowledge we reside on the ancestral lands and waters of the Coast Salish people who have called this place home since time immemorial and let us honor inherent, aboriginal and treaty rights that has been passed down from generation to generation.</i>
8:35 AM	<b>Citizen input</b>
8:40 AM	<b>Acceptance of July meeting minutes</b>
8:45 AM	<b>NW Straits Commission update – Christina Koons</b>
8:55 AM	<b>Marine Stewardship Area Plan Update: Progress and Next Steps</b> <i>Abigail Ames (MRC Research Assistant), Frances Robertson, &amp; MSA Update subcommittee</i>
10:00 AM	<b>Project Updates</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Plastic Free Salish Sea Launched (<i>Karin Roemers-Kleven</i>)</li><li>• SRKW Outreach &amp; Education (<i>Frances Robertson</i>)</li></ul>
10:15 AM	<b>Any Other Business/MRC Member news and comments</b>
10:30 AM	<b>Adjourn meeting</b>
10:30 AM	<b>Convene CAG meeting: Christina Koons, Chair</b>  <b>Salmon Recovery</b> -WRIA 2 Salmon Recovery Strategy Update -2021-2023 Lead Entity Funding Reduction
11:00 AM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Adjourn CAG meeting</b></li></ul>

Attached files: August minutes

**Committee Members in Attendance:** Cathleen Burns, Carl Davis, Megan Dethier, Jeff Dyer, Phil Green, Christina Koons, Lovel Pratt, Ivan Reiff, Karin Roemers-Kleven, Laura Jo Severson, Beth Tate, Kendra Smith,

**Ex-officio and County support staff:** Abigail Ames, Marta Green, Frances Robertson, Sam Whitridge,

**Public in attendance:** Christine Minney, Dana Oster, Ryan Palmateer, Cindy Wolf

**8:35 AM Convene Meeting**

*Christina Koons, Chair*

Begin with Coast Salish Acknowledgement: *Let us acknowledge we reside on the ancestral lands and waters of the Coast Salish people who have called this place home since time immemorial and let us honor inherent, aboriginal and treaty rights that has been passed down from generation to generation.* Welcome newest member Beth Tate. And County Council seat district 1 and 2 candidates are here.

**8:35 AM Citizen input**

*none*

**8:36 AM Acceptance of July meeting minutes**

Kendra moves to approve amended minutes, Megan seconds. All approve, none opposed.

**8:37 AM NW Straits Commission update**

*Christina Koons*

Christina will pass along minutes from last week's NW Straits meeting. The MRC symposium has wrapped, 7 MRC's presented about their work over 14 week period, it's all recorded and available. Communications audit – updated plan coming up soon to help in how we represent ourselves.

**8:43 AM Marine Stewardship Area Plan Update: Progress and Next Steps** *Abigail Ames*

Abigail, research assistant with MRC for the past year and a half, delivers presentation:

In 2004 SJ County council created Marine Stewardship Area encompassing all SJI's, MRC designated to write management plan. Today focus on biodiversity targets among 7 different habitat types.

March 2019-> present: Evaluated MSA strategies/objectives, built contact database/gathered knowledge (core group of researchers and managers), then hosted Marine Managers Workshop in mid-March 2020, data from workshop used to update biodiversity targets and identify top strategies

Armored shores: monitoring efforts have been limited. Since 2007, armoring increased and eelgrass habitat decreased. No invasive species poses big threat currently but need to monitor (green crab, sargassum). Issues of run-off, increased pollutants, forage fish health, high quality spawning habitat.

Kelp & eelgrass: foundational species. Approximately 100 miles of shoreline in SJC is eelgrass habitat. There's been decline in local densities especially due to eelgrass wasting disease. Primary concern with kelp is bull kelp. There have been regional declines in last decade, 36% loss

Bottom fish: lingcod and greenling. Lingcod has increased fishery pressure recently but still ok.

Rockfish closed in 2010 after population collapsed in 70's. Shorter lived species liked Quillback and copper are doing better, for longer lived like yellow eye and bocaccio it will take much longer to see progress. Adults live deep, but juveniles live in shallow habitats that are threatened by habitat degradation. WDFW plans to have a large-scale population estimate by 2021

Subtidal communities: focus on sea cucumbers, red urchins, and scallops. Sea cucumbers have been overharvested and poached, WDFW is adjusting quotas. Pinto abalone had huge collapse over a

decade ago, recently listed as endangered in 2019. New strategies being tested for restoration. knowledge gaps: habitat use, community structure, biodiversity, increasing vessel use impacts  
Pacific Salmon and forage fish: chinook, coho, pink, sockeye, chum, herring, pacific sand lance, surf smelt. Habitat issues for juveniles which support adult populations. Knowledge gaps: Local variations in habitat & water quality, predator interactions, forage fish population dynamics  
Marine Birds: revised this target to marine birds to include black oyster catcher (previously intertidal)

Recent trends from DFW, Pelagic cormorants and goldeneye populations increasing

Rhino auklets stable but recent mortality events associated with 2018 heat blob

Marbled murrelets are federally listed as endangered but not included in original MSA plan. These birds don't nest in SJI's but forage here so this habitat is essential to their well-being

Forage fish are an important component of marine health & wellness. Knowledge gaps around how forage fish species interact with birds, bird interactions with humans such as increased commercial and recreational vessel use, small oil spills, and increased predation by bald eagles restored here

Marine Mammals: Killer whales include endangered southern residents (decreased from 86 in 2007 to 73 now) and threatened transients. Calf survival higher for TWK than for SRKW. Knowledge gaps: availability/accessibility of prey, vessel impacts, population dynamics and TWK vs. SRKW differences.

Baleen Whales, humpback, minke and gray: Humpback and grays both increasing

Knowledge gaps: impact of ship-strike and gear entanglement, impact of forage fish populations

Other odontocetes: include harbor porpoise (increasing) and dalls porpoise (populations unknown)

Pinnipeds: Steller sea lions, California sea lion, northern elephant seals, harbor seals. First three populations are increasing, harbor seal population leveled out and stabilizing. Knowledge gaps: pinniped species and their prey, also entanglement, ship-strike, and human access to haul-out sites

Next steps:

Abigail is summarizing data. Frankie is doing same for socioeconomic and cultural targets, and specifically how human-related targets relate with biodiversity. Then finalize the updated plan.

Acknowledgements to key supporters, the MRC MSA Subcommittee included Megan D, Tina Whitman, Kari Koski, Phil Green, Christina Koons, and Lovel Pratt. Abigail thanks the MRC

## QUESTIONS

Ivan: about TKW –are you aware of 2019 population study by DFO? that reported 309 individuals growing at 4.1percent since 2012 added 100 calves since then

Cindy: about water quality issues – could you talk about most pressing needs?

Kendra: with freshwater we have a CW utility and ongoing projects to address stormwater runoff.

Target streams that have livestock use and low-quality ponds to repair riparian conditions and flow.

We're also street-sweeping and cleaning catch basin to minimize flushing of pollutants with rains.

I'm curious about impacts about a lot of boats in shallow bays where there's fine sediment.

Turbidity seems to be up in those areas, would be good to get more monitoring in those systems

Frankie: Jeff Gaekle wonders if some of eelgrass wasting disease is related to water quality.

Another concern related to boating is whether the no-discharge zone is being adhered to. There has been a lot of use this summer especially with the border closed, uptick in use at Roche Harbor pump-out. What are boaters doing in areas where there aren't those facilities?

Regarding vessel noise there is work on that and impacts on marine mammals. Hydrophone run by whale museum and SMRU and acoustic recorders on West side to better understand impacts of smaller vessels, especially as we go forward with marine spatial planning.

Also work to prevent oil spills. In terms of vessels we have both the noise and spill issues.

Lovel: In terms of vessel impacts, noise can affect fish as well as mammals. With risks of oil spills from large commercial vessels, probability is low but consequences would be catastrophic. Impacts could last for decades depending on material so prevention is paramount.

Marta: a workshop in 2016 determined that the positioning of a rescue tug for a disabled vessel, similar to the one at Neah Bay, in our waters would be a major risk mitigation measure. Investing in a tug here would avoid huge costs. We've launched a phase of the project yesterday of modelling logistics and garnering public support.

## 9:46 AM Project Updates

### • Plastic Free Salish Sea Launched

*Karin Roemers-Kleven*

We have toolkits for businesses/schools/individuals. Information at [www.plasticfreesalishsea.org](http://www.plasticfreesalishsea.org)

Now want to be more relevant on a daily basis, more than island cleanups a couple of times year.

In last subcommittee meeting we heard from Mark Ingham, county waste management coordinator about plastic types: only #1 and 2 are recyclable here. We need to rely on reuse and refuse.

Reminder: great island cleanup Sept 29-October 4<sup>th</sup>. We will pass on info about that to ensure participation by helping to clean different beaches

Christina: are there beach cleanups on each Island? how do I find the person organizing on Orcas?

Frankie: we'll post that info on the PFSS website, that'll be the central place for getting information

Karin: the vision is to ensure we aren't adding more plastic and hope our local ripple creates a wave into the future. We want to connect with the other 6 MRC's about this and collaborate. To that end we have participated in various MRC gatherings to talk about this, want more collaboration in future

Christina: has the NW Straits organized a way for MRC's to talk about Plastic-free, mini-symposium?

Dana: working on that now, we plan to follow up the virtual symposium with more targeted sessions including PFSS. Similar with Lovel and Marta for oil-spill consequences (Jefferson and Clallam are interested). Looking now at other topics to follow up on. Please contact me with specific suggestions

### • SRKW Outreach & Education

*Frances Robertson*

This summer has been different, no dock talks. Whale warning flag sign is up at Port of FH and RH every weekend, at Lopez too. Whale flags continue to go out, boats are flying the flag, especially whale watch vessels. The boater safety kiosk at County park will be finished tomorrow.

ACTION ITEM: have an informally/socially distanced opening. It's right by the boat launch.

Already talked about the coastal acoustic buoys (CABS) as part of Marine spatial planning effort, those are due to come out. We lost one CAB this summer. Some challenges due to current.

Oceans Initiative using data from 2003 to 2019, a team this summer tracking killer whales on West side and behavioral responses to vessel traffic etc. Contracted by WDFW.

Social data collection is underway, surveys went out to whale watch and kayak operators. West side resident survey postcard reminders arriving week after next. Still working on surveys to recreational fishing community and to local sailing/yacht clubs. Next user group is commercial fisherman

Kendra: I also want to mention some work with the tribes regarding cultural awareness on West side. Opportunity for county employees, project managers and other interested public to hear from Tribes on their feelings regarding tribal treaty rights, land and water use, etc. bring about a higher level of cultural awareness. hoping to set that up late October early November probably via zoom

ACTION ITEM: let Frankie know you're interested in being included we'll gather names to contact

### **10:13 AM Any Other Business/MRC Member news and comments**

Christina received invitation to participate in Puget Sound Partnership vital sound survey from Oregon University. Seems related to work with the MSA plan, she'll report back about Lovel: two updates, First a letter drafted to Inslee that 41 organizations have signed about large capacity Roberts Bank container ship terminal. Environmental review process found impacts on chinook salmon from Frasier, also to SRKW. We're asking Inslee to oppose the project and that if Canada moves forward to request additional mitigations, including an ERTV positioned in the Islands. Tankers are required to have tug escorts, safety precautions built in, but container ships have no such requirement. Frances has that letter and can share it, we also have a take action link on the Friends of San Juan home page (with ways to contact ministers in Canada, etc.) I also report that we initiated a pledge prompted by news that 3 SRKW are pregnant, we commit to giving them more space in hopes they can successfully birth live calves. There are similar pledges from both recreational and commercial boaters. I can send press releases about that ACTION ITEMS: include both documents mentioned by Lovel as attachments to these minutes Karin: At Eagle Cove some behavior we can't reach. There's an increase in private boaters. Fishers come in very close to the whales. We need to give space to the little ones and maternal groups. Lovel: Reports at Lime Kiln of boats too close, vessels going too fast, DFW not on the scene. Ivan: Pro-operators are giving SRKW extra space. Unfortunately we are the only boat slowing down in the half mile zone. This year I've seen some of the worst behavior in 17 years. Many recreational boaters, especially on weekends. There is much more work to do to educate public, not enough enforcement. And the average boater doesn't know what 100 yards or half a mile looks like on the water. I wonder if message should be more "if you see a whale or a whale warning flag, slow down and avoid the area period". Because public also can't identify different whales. ACTION ITEM: Frankie will confirm that enforcement number and post it on the MRC website

### **10:37 AM Adjourn Meeting, Convene CAG Meeting**

*Christina Koons, Chair*

- WRIA 2 Salmon Recovery Strategy Update

Over a million of funding this round, we approved our final list in August. September 16<sup>th</sup> is the final approval meeting to review projects from all over the state

Includes list of projects that are ready-to-go for 2021 and 2022 grant rounds, that process is wrapped up state-wide and sending 80 million total request to State legislature for projects that could be implemented over next 6 years. This is an effort to improve communication/transparency.

- 2021-2023 Lead Entity Funding Reduction

Another update: 15% cut to our operating budget over coming years, represents \$146K reduction Moving forward with Salmon recovery chapter strategy update, meeting monthly with consultant.

### **10:46 AM Adjourn CAG Meeting**

*Christina Koons, Chair*

Meeting adjourned, reconvene MRC. Other discussion: discuss zoom retreat?

Frances: likely November or December, please send ideas to Christina and me. I can send out a survey for priority topics. This will be where we set our priorities for the grant round.

-> In addition to Christina and Karin, Lovel and Kendra also interested in helping plan MRC retreat

ACTION ITEM Frankie will be in touch with those four to plan MRC retreat and potential times

10:54 AM **ADJOURN MRC Meeting**

*Christina Koons, Chair*