



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

Thursday, April 7, 2022  
8:30 AM-11:00 AM

Virtual Meeting via Zoom: [Join Zoom Meeting](#)  
Meeting ID: 878 2141 7647 / Passcode: 663186  
Call in number: +1 253 215 8782 US

## Agenda

<b>8:30 AM</b>	<b>Convene MRC Meeting – Christina Koons</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 have been passed down from generation to generation.</i>
<b>8:40 AM</b>	<b>Public Comment</b> <b>Approve MRC February minutes – Christina Koons</b>
<b>8:50 AM</b>	<b>NWSC meeting report to the MRC – Christina Koons</b>
<b>9:00 AM</b>	<b>MRC House Keeping: Frances Robertson</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Approval of Annual Report</li><li>• SSEC Conference</li><li>• Project updates</li><li>• Discussion – meeting in person</li></ul>
<b>9:15 AM</b>	<b>Discussion: Proposed committee structure change – Frances Robertson, Marta Green, &amp; Kendra Smith</b>
<b>9:30 AM</b>	<b>Presentation: Exploring protection priorities for Southern Resident killer whale foraging areas along the westside of San Juan Island: Summary of recommendations – Frances Robertson</b>
<b>10:05 AM</b>	<b>Member news and any other business</b>
<b>10:15 AM</b>	<b>Adjourn MRC meeting and Convene CAG meeting – Christina Koons</b>
<b>10:15 AM</b>	<b>Salmon Recovery protection strategy discussion – Sam Whitridge and TAG</b>
<b>10:55 AM</b>	<b>CAG updates/business – Sam Whitridge</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• SFRB site visit planning</li></ul>
<b>11:00 AM</b>	<b>Adjourn CAG meeting</b>

Attached: MRC March minutes  
2021 Annual Report

<https://www.sicmrc.org/other-content/exploring-protection-priorities-for-southern-resident-killer-whale-foraging-areas/>

**Committee Members in Attendance:** Matt Arata, Jeff Dyer, Kailey Genther, Phil Green, Christina Koons, Adam Parrott, Ivan Reiff, Karin Roemers-Kleven, Laura Jo Severson, Kendra Smith

**Ex-officio, County support staff and members of the public:** Jenny Atkinson, Matt Colston, Jenny DeGroot, Deborah Giles, Ray Glaze, Marta Green, Alexis Haifley, Sasha Horst, Tracie Merrill, Kat Moore, Laura Rivas, Frances Robertson, Barbara Rosenkotter, Byron Rot, Tina, Whitman, Sam Whitridge

8:35 AM **Convene MRC Meeting, Coast Salish Acknowledgement**

Christina Koons

*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 have been passed down from generation to generation.*

8:36 AM **Public Comment**

none

8:37 AM **Approve MRC March minutes**

Christina Koons

MOTION: Jeff moves to approve the March meeting minutes, Laura Jo seconds. All in favor. Minutes are approved.

8:38 AM **NWSC meeting report to the MRC**

Christina Koons

\$3million in congressionally directed spending was received by NWSC. Encourage all to attend monthly NWSC meetings if interest in attending Julia Parrish's series of scientists, last month Drew Harvell presented about eelgrass. Green crab is this month with Sean McDonald, April 22

8:41 AM **MRC House Keeping**

Frankie Robertson

- Approval of Annual Report – needs action today.

MOTION: Christina moves to approve the Report, Phil seconds. All in favor ("nicely done!"), the Report is approved.

8:42 AM 

- NWSC asked to submit letters for further congressionally directed funding from next year's federal budget. We updated last year's letter, need approval from MRC

MOTION: Jeff moves to approve the letter, Christina seconds. All in favor, the motion is approved.

8:44 AM 

- SSEC Conference, Frankie provides link to the program: <https://www.eventsair.com/ssec2022>

Christina, Jeff, Laura Jo, Karin (presenting a PFSS poster), Beth, and Phil are attending virtually. Presentations need to be uploaded by April 15<sup>th</sup>. Frankie registered these participants – check your email for confirmation.

Marta is presenting about oil spill analysis. Frankie is creating the PFSS poster for Karin to present, also participating on a panel about community-based approaches to killer whale protection and giving a traditional talk on the SRKW Westside project. The conference will also feature Carl Davis's video\*

*\* Carl's video is part of the following screening:*

*Join Orca Recovery Coordinator, Tara Galuska, on April 21 from 6 p.m. – 9 p.m. when she screens 6 short films about the Salish Sea's diverse ecosystems and communities. This is a preview of some of the topics that will be covered at the upcoming Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference on April 26.*

*The virtual film screening is free, but space is limited. Register now: <https://bit.ly/3KTSnGN>*

8:48 AM 

- Project updates

Seabin going in next month thanks to Adam. Taking on a new intern, plan for them to help with daily monitoring of the Seabin, monitoring and documenting ulva growth at False Bay. We'll start visitor surveys again Memorial day weekend.

Frankie: I'll email the MRC and FB residents about a schedule, focus on low tides and times with most visitors. Intern will also lead the data collection surveys to estimate *Ulva* sp. presence, distribution, and density throughout summer, 1-2 surveys/month June-September. The QAPP has now been submitted to Ecology for approval.

Jeff: on the Seabin, have we done outreach to private marinas? Does anyone want to check it out/discuss?

Frankie: not yet, one school class from Orcas is planning to come see it and analyze data from last summer

ACTION ITEM: Jeff will reach out to groups on SJ, see if we can organize more visits

Adam: it would be cool to build a display showing what the Seabin has removed

ACTION ITEM: vessel counts and False Bay effort will begin Memorial day weekend, Frankie will email volunteers

8:56 AM **Discussion: Proposed committee structure change** *Frankie Robertson, Marta Green and Kendra Smith*

Kendra (shares screen): exciting advancements in marine program, integrate work further among MRC/and LIO. Potential to use engaged community and staffing capacity more effectively where we have overlapping roles. Streamline. Need to manage funding coming in now without staffing up too much. We suggest addition of the word 'advisory' = the Marine Resources Advisory Committee, then subcommittees for core areas of interest. We already have coordinated delivery: overlap of funding sources, priority threats, project types, membership targets. Current staffing structure with 2.6 FTE (siloes), and proposed structure with 3.4 FTE accounting for administrative work already happening. Added position to support program management/coordination. Need approval through County.

Talked with Tom Cowan, PSP, NWS, there was some concern about loss of MRC identity. If we maintain a close title of the name, it's maintaining and expanding MRC's activities, same website with connection to NWS. Action projects (MRC) vs. Planning (LIO) – opportunity to leverage LIO resources for shovel-ready projects in salmon recovery etc.

Byron: the Marine Project Manager can apply for SRFB funding, i.e. it's not a conflict of interest

QUESTIONS

Christina: Karin, Phil and I met with Lucas and NWS executive committee to hear concerns. MRC system created to promote bottom-up community membership. Do you see this new structure addressing this concern?

Marta: driver behind the Action Agenda and LIO is locally directed recovery work, for local projects. I don't see a conflict, we'll still push for work that benefits us locally. We already share local priorities with these other entities.

Kendra: we need to develop a work plan for LIO money and it would be great to have this group participate in that

Tina: Lovel had a conflict so speaking on her behalf. Efficiency makes sense and not being siloes, need to have enough department/staff to handle this money when it flows. But consider how the Implementation Action Agenda made Tribes a decision-making authority for the LIO-portion of the funds, important to preserve that part of the structure.

Marta: Tribes have unfilled roles on the Action Agenda, 3 positions out of 5 that haven't participated for several years. Now with 4-year \$400K workplan, need to develop workplan and then decisions to apply for individual project funds will fall on individual sponsors.

Laura: In the past LIO had one annual decision about \$100K. Now there may be many smaller decisions about how to support sponsor-grant funding. Partnership is on board with this proposal, open to hearing details and help develop it.

Karin: MRC is a bottom-up organization where citizens get to give input on marine resources –careful it doesn't become a county organization that has some citizens but with reduced input. Also, will the LIO be tacked on to end of the CAG meeting? I'm in favor of increased efficiency and removal of silos, just don't want MRC to be swallowed up

Byron: Tribes are Sovereign Nations, they work at the government-to-government decision-making level, which the LIO addressed. Maybe have a government-to-government Marine subcommittee that deals with policy level issues?

Frankie: MRC has already been part of setting priorities, this funding coming in now is an opportunity to move the needle and best use resources. This is about continuing to involve community as we move forward. Government

looks to us at the local level to tell them what's needed, e.g. local regulations about SRKW led to state and federal regulations

Kendra: Timeline is to get a thumbs up now, then talk with Jamie, then formalize it with a vote maybe by June

Sasha: I'm taking notes to share with executive committee. NWS has questions, understand need for efficiency

**ACTION ITEM:** Kendra will share her powerpoint presentation with Sasha and Laura, and all the MRC

Jeff: I give thumbs-up, as a volunteer citizen on the MRC I trust you, I see the challenges. This is a good move forward

9:45 AM **Presentation: Exploring protection priorities for Southern Resident killer whale foraging areas along the westside of San Juan Island: Summary of recommendations** *Frankie Robertson*

Wrapping up this effort on data we've collected for this project and present where we landed on a recommendation.

The west side is an important high-value resource area (review some history of the no-go zone). Local community workshops identified need for greater protection and for identifying foraging hotspots. Known presence/proximity of vessels impact SRKW in various ways causing physiological stress; importantly – reduced time spent foraging.

Project goals: collect relevant data (acoustic monitoring, animal presence) and understand community values/priorities

\* All data presented are on the MRC website – page dedicated to this project, <https://www.sjcmrc.org/other-content/exploring-protection-priorities-for-southern-resident-killer-whale-foraging-areas/>

Whale foraging analysis: Combined data from 7 different sources (land-based and boat-based observations) since 2003. Showed areas of highest foraging off Southwest area and onto Salmon Bank, and in Haro Strait around Lime Kiln.

Acoustic monitoring: Higher occurrence of vessel activity on weekends and holidays.

Social values and attitudes: Gathered information from 7 different groups. Series of stakeholder engagement sessions with interactive web map to look at overlap of whale foraging areas with different user groups' high-value areas.

Management Alternatives: Combination of spatial and temporal tools/strategies could reduce/remove disturbance from vessel presence in whales' highest foraging areas, provide most protection for whales and preserve sovereignty of Tribes. Propose a quiet area on west side. Certain activities (fishing and whale watching) restricted, triggered by presence of whales. Slow-zone would be in place May-September. Also limit research-vessels in Restricted Activity Zones, and human-powered craft remain within 100 yards of shore.

This recommendation is rooted in science, continues to encompass human activities that hold value for the community

Frankie will present this to council on April 19<sup>th</sup>, then submit full report to Tribal/Federal/State partners for peer review then final report due to funders as a grant deliverable, want a head-nod from MRC that we should take this forward

**QUESTIONS**

Ivan: historically expect to see SRKW all year. So why restrict May-September? Will this start when first SRKW seen?

Frankie: we'd focus on a peak boating season. Like ECHO program in Haro Strait, triggered by whales' arrival in June.

Ivan: if aim is to lower volume during prime boating season that makes sense. But rules about migratory animals that most days won't be around doesn't make sense. Should present this with rationale based on season of highest boating activity. The animals' activity is not static. We should stay away from restriction based on when they arrive.

Ray: As complexity of regulations increases, so does the difficulty of compliance and enforcement

Karin: What indicates whale presence? Visual or acoustic confirmation? How to communicate to citizens/water-users?

Frankie: implementing the proposals we're putting in would require significant resources for monitoring and enforcement. Navigation software has the capacity to incorporate zones. Trying to find the balance, some protection.

Jeff: SRKW are in distress/decline, what we have now isn't working, they're still in danger. For recreational fishermen, it's more distressing to not know from what their plans can be. If rules are clear, they'll know in advance where to go

Byron: I think the go-slow and no-go both needs to be seasonal, and not when whales are present. Needs to be clear

Laura Jo: speed in the voluntary go-slow zone is 7 knots. That is not slow enough.

Christina: do you need our approval here before taking this to council?

Frankie: we've had support funding from NWS foundation and commission, some from county. We need to present this to NFWF as a deliverable of the grant. We can quantify how much habitat we're protecting and what its value is.

MOTION: Christina proposes to advance this work's findings and recommendations to SJC council so staff can move ahead with grant deliverables. Jeff seconds. All in favor. Motion passes

#### 10:00 AM **Member news and any other business**

Karin: The Great Island Clean Up is on Saturday 23rd of April. we need all MRC members involved! Sign up on the website! Also PFSS has a facebook page, please "like it" and also share, share, share!

Sasha: I'm including that in our newsletter, Karin, thanks!

#### 10:34 AM **Adjourn MRC meeting and convene CAG**

*Christina Koons*

#### 10:35 AM **Salmon Recovery Protection Strategy Discussion**

*Sam Whitridge and TAG*

Idea for this discussion came after TAG reaffirmed protection of intact nearshore habitat as the top priority salmon recovery strategy in San Juan County. Some MRC members had questions/issues. Sam sent materials regarding protection in 2017 PIAT ranking criteria – looks at fish use (shore forms/migration regions), parcel characteristics and habitat condition, as considerations for protection projects.

Kendra: I know focus is primarily on shoreline/riparian area for purchases. My frustration is that protected areas are restricted to public access. Also that salmon restoration projects don't need to have permanent protection – should we change that for easements? Lastly, I prefer to see wealthy owners donate land if they believe strongly in protecting it.

Tina: The SMP's job isn't salmon recovery and to protect shorelines permanently, has conflicting mandates to prioritize ports and marinas, adherence to the SMP won't universally improve habitat. There are complicated reasons why Trust doesn't always want an easement. Don't want so many rules that we're prevented from doing anything

Barbara: current criteria should be more robust. But that's not a full answer. For the Trust, any acquisition is in perpetuity forever. There's a lot we don't know about how effective restoration actions are, can't bring habitat back fully. Time limits on restoration projects present difficulties. And many legacy landowners are land-wealthy but cash-poor, come to the Trust because want to see property protected long-term but can't provide stewardship support.

Ray Glaze: regarding the SMP, we have opportunities coming up now and shouldn't let perfect be enemy of the good.

Kendra: maybe the problem is optics. Cost of properties is high, trying to achieve a net gain in salmon recovery that means not only protecting the best but also actively pursuing restoration. There's a limited pot of money

Sam: we set a high bar to show benefit of habitat as well as development risk. Also leverage with other funding sources

Barbara: we're looking to maintain property from ever being developed or being developed further long term.

Kendra: addition of those factors including development status - could that be expanded on? Goes back to the SMP.

Tina: don't want to make things so prescriptive that a good project can't make it. Rely on the process, TAG and CAG.

11:01 AM **CAG updates/business**

*Sam Whitridge*

- SRFB site visit planning

May 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> are the Salmon recovery site visits, hybrid virtual presentation and in-person site visit.

ACTION ITEM: Sam will send out agenda mid-April

11:02 AM New Partnership Recovery coordinator

Laura: meet Matt Colston, supporting the MRC for the Partnership. Lives in Oak Harbor, worked for Island County.

Matt: it was a packed meeting, nice to see what goes on!

11:04 AM **Adjourn CAG meeting**