



**SAN JUAN COUNTY**  
**Marine Resources**  
**Committee**



## **Marine Advisory Committees**

### **MRC-CAG-LIO**

### **Meeting Agenda**

**Thursday, May 1st, 2025**  
**9:00 AM – 12:00 PM**

#### **Microsoft Teams**

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***While this is a virtual meeting, a public meeting place is available at the Beaverton Valley Operations Center, 1609 Beaverton Valley Rd. in Friday Harbor for those without mobile phone or internet access.***

9:00 AM	<b>Convene MRC Meeting – Adam Parrott</b>
9:05 AM	<b>Public Comment</b>
9:10 AM	<b>Approve meeting agenda – All</b> <b>Approve MRC March meeting minutes – MRC Members</b>
9:15 AM	<b>NWSC Meeting Report to the MRC- Christina Koons</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Updates on NWSC Reauthorization Legislation/Puget Sound Day on the Hill</li></ul>
9:30 AM	<b>MRC Updates/Business</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Planning MRC projects for 2025-2027 MRC grant- <i>Sam Whitridge</i></li><li>• Discussion re: potential MRC Advisory Actions- <i>Sam Whitridge</i><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Revisit OPALCO Tidal Energy Generation Project</li><li>○ Mooring Buoy Vacation Rental Businesses</li><li>○ Federal proposal to curtail Endangered Species Act habitat protections</li></ul></li><li>• Upcoming MRC Volunteer Opportunities- <i>Katie Johnson</i><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Friday Harbor Labs Open House</li><li>○ Plastic Free Salish Sea Monthly Cleanups</li><li>○ Dock Talks</li><li>○ Sailing with SJI Yacht Club</li></ul></li><li>• MRC subcommittee updates</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Outreach &amp; Education- <i>Katie Johnson</i></li> <li>○ Plastic Free Salish Sea- <i>Karin Roemers-Kleven/Katie Johnson</i></li> <li>○ Seagrass Protection- <i>Beth Tate/Katie Johnson</i></li> <li>○ Derelict Vessel Prevention- <i>Adam Parrott/Kari Koski</i></li> <li>○ Oil Spill/ERTV-<i>Sam Whitridge</i></li> <li>● Other subcommittee updates</li> </ul>
10:25 AM	<b>Committee member updates and any other business</b>
10:30 AM	<b>Adjourn MRC Meeting</b> <b>Convene LIO Meeting</b>
10:30 AM	<b>Planning for San Juan Local Forum at August Leadership Council Meeting-</b> <i>Tristan Contesse and Wendy Loosle, Puget Sound Partnership</i>
10:50 AM	<b>LIO Business agenda</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Local Forum Planning Discussions- <i>Sam Whitridge/Katie Johnson</i></li> <li>● PSP Updates- <i>Jason Lim</i></li> <li>● Discussion regarding Healthy Shorelines Action Plan- <i>Katie Johnson</i></li> <li>● Update on upcoming May 8<sup>th</sup> Ecosystem Coordination Board Meeting/Island County Local Forum- <i>Katie Johnson</i></li> </ul>
11:20 AM	<b>Adjourn LIO Meeting</b> <b>Convene CAG Meeting</b>
11:20 AM	<b>CAG Updates/Business- <i>Sam Whitridge</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Updates on State/Federal Salmon Recovery Funding</li> <li>● 2025 Salmon Recovery Site Visit Report</li> <li>● 2025 Salmon Recovery Grant Round proposal review and next steps</li> </ul>
12:00 PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Adjourn CAG Meeting</b></li> </ul>

**MRC, CAG and LIO Committee Members in Attendance:** Paul Andersson, Matt Arata, Charles Bookman, David Checkley, Kailey Genter, Brian Goodremont, Olivia Graham, Christina Koons, Adam Parrott, Lovel Pratt, Karin Roemers-Kleven, Beth Tate, Sandy Wyllie-Echeverria

**Ex-officio, County support staff and members of the public:** Victoria Compton, Tristan Contesse, Rich Goodhart, Marta Green, Sasha Horst, Katie Johnson, Lee Kirby, Jason Lim, Wendy Loosle, Jessica Owens, Kendra Smith, Heather Spore, Joey Ullman, Sam Whitridge, Marjorie Wonham

9:02 AM **Convene MRC Meeting** *Adam Parrott*

9:05 AM **Public Comment** *none*

9:06 AM **Approve meeting agenda, Approve MRC March meeting minutes** *MRC Members*

Sandy moves to accept the minutes as presented, Beth seconds. All in favor. The March minutes are approved.

Christina wants to discuss the kelp exhibit on the agenda under MRC updates, upcoming volunteer opportunities.

Sam has one scheduling item to bring up around the July meeting; it's currently scheduled for July 3<sup>rd</sup> just before the holiday weekend. Lovel moves to push the meeting back a week to July 10<sup>th</sup>, Brian seconds. So moved.

Dave moves to accept the agenda with additions, Sandy seconds, the agenda is approved.

9:08 AM **NWSC Meeting Report to the MRC** *Christina Koons*

Christina sent a recent email with meeting highlights and links. New chair and vice chair were elected; Jamie Stephens from SJI appointed to the Commission. WA Seagrass news about how they're tracking funding issues. Salish Sea institute held a workshop yesterday about successes and challenges in protection, the event was recorded. Green crab monitoring has begun. Frankie Robertson is in Washington DC now with Kari McVeigh. They met with Maria Cantwell and learned that the reauthorization bill has passed out of Senate.

9:12 AM **MRC Updates/Business**

- Planning for MRC projects for 2025-2027 NWSC grant

*Sam*

*Whitridge*

Staff and Olivia have been meeting to discuss grant proposal, moving forward with our core programs like derelict vessel (DV) prevention and marine stewardship. Planning a community engagement initiative around the MSA to foster a sense of ownership/place. Pulling together that proposal, I can share drafts with the MRC for feedback

Sasha: the State budget passed with MRC funding intact, assuming governor signs. First year of NOAA funding is already awarded, it's the EPA funding in year two that's still in question. But we're moving forward with plans

Kendra: can we include a strategy in the community initiative for long-term funding for the marine program? Focus on reducing our reliance on grant funding. For example, a marine discover pass for boats passing through islands. Some ideas may require State legislation. Also looking at possibility for local resources to support the DV program

Lovel: it's worthy of an in-depth discussion about different options to support this program long-term

Charles: Discover Pass is clearly a state program. Does that legislation need to be tweaked to include state parks?

Adam: can we put this on the June agenda? In our role as an advisory committee, put in some research

Lovel: I suggest we establish a subcommittee to investigate options and provide recommendations

MOTION: Lovel moves to create a subcommittee around project funding, Charles seconds. So moved

Charles: I can't dig into this until the latter half of July. I'll be on the subcommittee and take more of a lead then

Sam can take the lead on coordinating and scheduling an initial meeting. Kendra and Lovel are interested

ACTION ITEM: we'll add this to the agenda for June, subcommittee will meet before then

9:31 AM • Discussion re: potential MRC Advisory Actions

*Sam Whitridge*

o Revisit OPALCO Tidal Energy Generation Project

OPALCO has filed draft license application. Comment period open, extended until September

Lovel: I have concerns about the location of the project in Rosario Strait near major shipping lanes and ability of OPALCO to respond to emergencies as needed. I'll bring this up next week at Puget Sound Harbor Safety meeting

Heather: I represent Swinomish, we and the Tulalip were successful in extending this comment period due to the lack of tribal consultation. We plan to dig through their environmental assessment files and provide comments. We're concerned about effects on marine resources, habitat, tribal fishing, etc. There are a lot of potential adverse impacts. We're happy to coordinate responses and answer questions,

[hspore@swinomish.nsn.us](mailto:hspore@swinomish.nsn.us)

David: We should send some recommendation to the Council. I'd be willing to help draft a letter with Lovel and Tina

ACTION: David will get in touch with Tina and Heather to coordinate about writing a draft

Charles: consider our posture with OPALCO, let's support their effort to solve a long-term power supply problem.

9:43 AM o Mooring Buoy Vacation Rental Business

Kendra: there are several folks contemplating use of private mooring buoys as a rental/lease/exchange program. Code 18.50.300E specifies against commercial use of private buoys. There's also an RCW governing private mooring buoys stating commercial use of these private operations isn't permitted. Any enforcement would be from DNR

Beth: one reason this isn't acceptable is because shoreline owners are granted a lease from DNR but commercial owners need to apply for a different kind of lease, so buoys used in this way would be out of compliance with DNR

Joey: those are called DNR registrations. If the buoy owner doesn't have waterfront property, there are different types of fees/licenses, but they can own a buoy. They must show a certain amount of residential use

Adam: they said they're working within DNR compliance by making membership fees, not rental i.e. 'sharing' buoys

Beth: Does the County have any code regarding commercial buoys or is it all about residential buoys? It's unclear from the WAC, it refers to residential and recreational

Joey: we don't have any commercial buoys; we have residential buoys that act as private aids to navigation, but they all have a DNR registration (i.e. lease)

David: buoys being used by private people but contracted through this process. May need new legislations or rules

Kendra details some of the risks. What if people stay longer than planned and it functions as a liveaboard, etc.

Joey: for the campsite analogy, it's not just like driving up and parking. There's some skill involved in attaching to the buoy and detaching, we'll need to deal with the issues that turnover of multiple users incurs

Heather: are most of the buoys that would participate in high density areas or are they potentially in remote places where there would be increased impacts to eelgrass?

Kendra: we don't know yet, it depends on who signs up, we have over 1800 buoys. But how many permitted?

Beth: we'd only allow helical anchors in eelgrass. So installation shouldn't impact, but transient visitors may impact

David: From March 6 MRC minutes, "Frankie: counted 1800 mooring buoys in 2022, and we know more have been installed since then, probably 2000 now, that's a third of all the mooring buoys in WA... 800 or so are authorized."

9:59 AM o Federal proposal to curtail Endangered Species Act habitat protections

Sandy: Services are considering rewriting the stipulations under the ESA which could do away with protections for habitats for endangered species. Comment letters due by May 19<sup>th</sup>, I'm willing to write a letter together

Lovel: I can provide a letter that Friends is signing on to that did an in-depth look

Olivia, Joey, Kailey: happy to sign on but don't have time to write it, want Sandy to send them information

Lovel: We're an advisory committee, we could provide a letter to Council to submit, not our own recommendation

Sandy moves to draft a letter of recommendation for Council to send; Karin seconds. So moved

- This would need to get on Council Agenda by May 13<sup>th</sup>, so the letter would need to be ready between May 6-8<sup>th</sup>

Sandy: in that case I need to rescind/strike that motion. Individuals can send in letters on their own

ACTION: Katie will send out information about this for people who want to write their own letters

Kendra: I believe the issue in the change of the ESA is the wording of "Harm"

Here is some more background around the proposed rule change that would rescind the definition of "Harm":

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/04/17/2025-06746/rescinding-the-definition-of-harm-under-the-endangered-species-act>. Comments must be received by May 19, 2025.

FYI see also <https://www.jdsupra.com/legalnews/definition-of-harm-endangered-species-5094938/>

10:09 AM • Upcoming MRC Volunteer Opportunities

*Katie Johnson*

We track your MRC hours, I'd like to see more members get involved in outreach activities!

Lee Kirby: I met Katie at the GICU (Great Island Clean up) in the harbor and realized there's a natural alignment between our boats and islands without ferry service. We've planned a cruise for May 31<sup>st</sup> to Stuart to meet up and clean beaches. Then on June 1<sup>st</sup> Sucia, and on June 2<sup>nd</sup> Jones. Boats can help bring folks over for the clean up. Power Squadron will join us, we'd like to have more community & MRC involvement. Opening day for boating is also this weekend, I'd like to have a banner for PFSS. Contact [vicecommodore@sjyc.com](mailto:vicecommodore@sjyc.com) or [papakirbs@proton.me](mailto:papakirbs@proton.me)

ACTION: can Lee please send out a written blurb about what you just described so we can send it around

o Friday Harbor Labs Open House

Karin: I will support the booth for FHL open house this Saturday May 3<sup>rd</sup> but need an extra partner

o Plastic Free Salish Sea Monthly Cleanups – first Sundays of the month, 11am-1pm

Visitors Bureau is doing this May 4<sup>th</sup>, June will be hosted by the Pride Foundation with a cookout after

o Sailing with SJI Yacht Club

Contact Lee Kirby, sign-up sheet for time slots

o Dock Talks

There'll be a sign-up sheet for this, encourage folks to give whales space. Dedicate time to community engagement

10:18 AM • MRC subcommittee updates

o Outreach & Education

*Katie Johnson*

Will meet as a subcommittee soon. I met with DNR about Cattle Point interpretive center, they're waiting for approval of some funding. I put in an extension on our grant, so we have until next January to wrap this up. The MRC voted to add a youth engagement position, hope that goes to council on May 13<sup>th</sup>. The 2024 Annual report has been completed – you can see all the good things you've been up to, I'll share that with the group

o Plastic Free Salish Sea

*Karin Roemers-Kleven*

We had a productive meeting this week, thinking about some new projects. One is called "think before you shrink", using plastic to cover boats for the season. This theme is about looking at other opportunities for better coverage. Also, "cover your load" – still lots of open trucks taking garbage to the dump. We want to reinvigorate that project with a display at the Fair and at the July 4<sup>th</sup> parade. I've reached out to Becky for the fourth of July parade

10:23 AM o Seagrass Protection

*Katie Johnson*

Beth says the HSIL eelgrass project is kicking off and there may be additional shoots available for transplant Sandy: we had a great meeting last week on the collection of Hydrogen sulfide data

Olivia: HSIL starts in July, number of sites around the island, looking at various parameters with a variety of partners

Katie: and please continue to do shore-based vessel surveys in key locations. Even a data point of zero is important

o Derelict Vessel Prevention

*Adam Parrott*

Sam: Kari gave an update on this program to county council in April, gave a talk at the yacht club. Started patrols in collaboration with Frankie doing concurrent mooring buoy surveys. Seven vessels of concern now on priority list. Mini-voluntary turn-in even last month, four boats turned in, all reimbursable by DNR. There was an emergency response to the Apache sailing vessel, it hit rocks in Cattle Pass. Helicopter rescue of two people, one fatality, vessel surfaced near Iceberg point. It was reported and the owner's insurance paid to have it towed and dismantled. DNR is at end of biennium for funding

10:27 AM o Oil Spill/ERTV

*Sam Whitridge*

I worked with Frankie and Jane Fuller to provide materials to bring to DC so can incorporate it into discussions.

Lovel: we're meeting with Cantwell staff currently and this will be their main opportunity to speak on this issue. There was a presentation to Congress yesterday morning available online

10:30 AM **Committee member updates and any other business**

*Lovel Pratt*

Three updates, 1. In 2021, MRC partnered with Salish Sea institute to address growler navy jets noise. Friends is sending out an action alert, comments are open until May 13<sup>th</sup>. When they did their initial EIS in 2018, they said there were no studies on SRKW impacts, but then there was one in 2020 that documented significant

noise in the air and underwater. Staff could bring this to council's attention, or people could submit their own comments.

2. law in books saying a WA state pilot is required on any tanker going through WA state waters, but BC coast pilots have been allowed. This came up in session, I'll put a link the chat to that budget discussion

3. At the Board of Pilotage commissioners meeting, someone from the Coast Guard discussed staffing changes and how they're being engaged to redirect resources to border security. There are then less resources to make sure that recreational and fishing vessels are going to stay out of commercial lanes. This is a real concern going into boating season that there won't be the same level of oversight for vessels during key points in the season

Christina: the Saturday Sept 27<sup>th</sup> soiree hopefully sponsored by MRC at SJC Museum of Arts exhibit on kelp. Good opportunity for PR about the MRC. I reached out to folks who were interested in participating.

Karin: I am interested in leading the Kelp project for the MRC

Brian: there's a new passenger service under a County RFP, provides link

<https://www.sanjuansafaris.com/passenger-boat-service>

#### 10:39 AM **Adjourn MRC Meeting**

Adam moves to adjourn, Lovel seconds (commence LIO meeting until 11:18 AM)

#### 11:19 AM **Convene CAG Meeting**

#### 11:19 AM **CAG Updates/Business**

*Sam Whitridge*

•2025 Salmon Recovery Site Visit Report and Updates on State/Federal Salmon Recovery Funding

Grant round is in full swing. Some of you participated in site visits (actual and virtual). Three projects, one acquisition on Cascade Creek, one is an outer-islands land ownership assessment. And one is a Friends of a SJ's restoration project on Upright Head, Lopez.

Sam reviews the numbers, decrease of about \$70K in funding. We will have some riparian funding, still unknown how much. There may be some funds returning from the Jackson Beach project. PSP wants to pay for that project which frees up SRFB money that would come back into this grant round

In terms of federal funding. Administration and office of budget management regarding plans for NOAA, intent to implement significant cuts in next fiscal year, that would include the PAC SURF funding which is a huge portion of salmon recovery funding. Its loss would be a major blow to salmon recovery efforts, that's still a work in progress.

David: what about PSAR funding, not just SRFB?

Sam: that was funded at 60 million (Jason confirms amount), that's a reduction from last biennium but a decent outcome all things considered. Sam describes how PSAR funds are distributed.

Lovel: there was a proposal to put some PSAR money into general funds, that would have affected many projects. Thanks to those who reached out to legislatures and made sure it was known that money was obligated.

Sam: There were some salmon recovery funds from 2022 already allocated and being implemented, under contract. Thankfully there was a full court press on our legislators

• 2025 Salmon Recovery Grant Round proposal review and next steps

We're in the technical review process now. TAG met recently to review proposals. Determination of project approval comes next – final approval by TAG, and then CAG review in July and August.

#### 11:31 AM **Adjourn CAG Meeting**