



SAN JUAN COUNTY
Marine Resources
Committee



Marine Advisory Committees

MRC-CAG-LIO

Meeting Agenda

Thursday, October 2nd, 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	Convene MRC Meeting – Adam Parrott
9:05 AM	Public Comment
9:10 AM	Approve meeting agenda – All Approve MRC September meeting minutes – MRC Members
9:15 AM	Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Updates- Christina Koons • Debrief Sept 26th NWSC Meeting in Friday Harbor • November 7-8 NWSC Conference
9:25 AM	Presentation: San Juan County Recreational Vessel Study- Dr. Frances Robertson, Marine Project Manager- San Juan County Department of Environmental Stewardship
10:00 AM	MRC Updates/Business • OPALCO Tidal Energy Proposal/San Juan County Council Comments- <i>Sam Whitridge</i> • MRC Youth Membership Interview Updates- <i>Katie Johnson</i> • 2025 MRC Retreat Early Planning- <i>Sam Whitridge</i> • MRC subcommittee updates ○ Outreach & Education- <i>Katie Johnson</i> ○ Plastic Free Salish Sea- <i>Karin Roemers-Kleven/Katie Johnson</i> ○ Seagrass Protection- <i>Beth Tate/Katie Johnson</i> ○ Derelict Vessel Prevention- <i>Adam Parrott/Kari Koski</i>

	○ Oil Spill/ERTV-Sam Whitridge/Lovel Pratt
10:45 AM	Committee member updates and any other business
10:50 AM	Adjourn MRC Meeting Convene LIO Meeting
10:50 AM	LIO Business agenda- Jason Lim/Katie Johnson • PSP Updates • Local Forum Follow up • Healthy Shorelines: ECB, Action Plans, & SMA Rulemaking Open houses • '26-'28 Contract updates • SILs-LIO Meeting report out
11:30 AM	Adjourn LIO Meeting Convene CAG Meeting
11:30 AM	CAG Updates/Business- Sam Whitridge • Report out on September SRFB Meeting • Update on status of Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery Funding (PCSRF)
12:00 PM	Adjourn CAG Meeting

MRC, CAG and LIO Committee Members in Attendance: Matt Arata, Paul Andersson, Charles Bookman, David Checkley, Gregg Dunphy, Kailey Genther, Patti Gobin, Rich Goodhart, Brian Goodremont, Olivia Graham, Christina Koons, Adam Parrott, Mike Ramsey, Karin Roemers-Kleven, Craig Smith, Beth Tate, Joey Ullman, Sandy Wyllie-Echeverria,

Ex-officio, County support staff and members of the public: Audrey Coyne, Jane Fuller, Marta Green, Katie Johnson, Kirsten Kane, Kari Koski, Jason Lim, Frances Robertson, Kendra Smith, Sonora Tate, Sam Whitridge, Jeff Whitty

9:03 AM **Convene MRC Meeting**

Adam Parrott

9:04 AM **Public Comment**

Sandy Wyllie-Echeverria

I want to remark on the sad passing of Jane Goodall and think about how important she was to science

9:05 AM **Approve meeting agenda**

All

No additions or edits, the agenda is approved

Approve MRC September meeting minutes

MRC Members

Sam received no edits. Kailey moves to approve the minutes, Sandy seconds. All in favor, the minutes are approved

9:06 AM **Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Updates**

Christina Koons

- Debrief Sept 26th NWSC Meeting in Friday Harbor

Sam: NWSC meeting in Friday Harbor last Friday, Frankie & I met the group at Jackson Beach for a site visit, discussed the creosote removal project and some future restoration plans. We also talked about how the Port of Friday Harbor is purchasing the cannery on the other side of Jackson. Jane Fuller kicked off the meeting with opening remarks. Frankie spoke about the vessel impacts survey project. We participated in the business meeting. Christina: from the business meeting, the commission has created a guidance document around funding activities, it'll be shared with staff. MRC volunteer kayakers completed all bull kelp surveys for 2025, data are being prepared

- **November 7-8 NWSC Conference** will be in La Conner. There's some concern about the cost of attending Kendra: we're fortunate that three marine grants have come through, but issues with the County budget. It would be great if anyone can pay their own way to the conference. There's no registration fee, costs are travel and hotel. Jeff: Happy to shuttle people from ferries if people want to walk on Adam: and note that we'll have our MRC/LIO/CAG meeting the day before the conference Christina: note the registration closes in five days on October 7th

9:17 AM **Presentation: San Juan County Recreational Vessel Study**

Frances Robertson

Frankie presents the same slides as at the NWSC meeting last week:

In 2020 summer, there were boats in places we'd never seen before in numbers we've never seen before. That motivated us to look at vessel use/presence in the County. Nearshore habitats are essential for juvenile salmon and other endangered and commercial species. Bull kelp beds have declined 30%. Traditional knowledge helps show where kelp has been in past. Boat impacts like anchoring affect eelgrass negatively. Example from Shallow Bay Labor Day Saturday, 259 boats but only 44 mooring balls. We need to better understand vessel density and impacts and overlap with key marine habitats. Focusing on aerial surveys from last summer; there were other methods not discussed here. Frankie describes aerial survey method with line transect surveys. Map shows 16 sites that are known hotspots, some are marine parks This is the first study to implement this type of distance sampling methodology to understand boat presence and density. We flew eight survey days between Memorial Day week-

end and late September recording vessel type and size, and inclinometer angle for the exact location of boats. Photos to compare later with survey data. Frankie shares analysis and results – July and August showed higher numbers than June and September with Labor Day weekend being the highest. All locations tracked similar pattern.

Frankie reviews the hotspots for highest vessel numbers. Highest density were Sucia and Stuart (both popular marine state parks), and Fisherman Bay on Lopez. It was difficult to survey west side of SJI due to proximity with Canadian air space. Map shows vessel density with respect to eelgrass, crab and forage fish habitat, and known mooring buoy locations. Incorporated habitat and vessel layers into an interactive map,

<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/77c21111e2640918a2b28d7988f6ec1>

Conclusions: distance sampling methods were well-suited to estimating vessels at sea. Between 1200-1500 boats in SJC waters (not including marinas or private docks) equivalent of eight boats per county mile. Moderate overlap with vessel density in locations with varieties of important marine habitats. We're finalizing a density surface model analysis and sharing results with marine managers, exploring potential management options to reduce impacts

QUESTIONS

Charles: given the State Parks' role in being aggregators of boats, will you share these data with them?

Frankie: yes, they're in process of upgrading buoys at State Parks – they're key partners in this work

Joey: we're on contract with State Parks to replace 90 concrete-anchor buoys with helical anchors over coming year

Frankie: that update has been a multi-year process, they're also doing a mooring buoy tie-up system at Echo Bay

Joey: it's a linear moorage system, with a goal of saving anchor points

Frankie: Here's a link to the online survey for providing input to help prioritize areas for protection and restoration.

<https://forms.gle/8fPJXTDnehM1Lzh36>

- brief discussion about the linear moorage systems; boats don't always use them, it doesn't work for everyone

Past kelp surveys in 2006, then Samish has been surveying based on county's aerial imagery.

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/b9f979a547004c32a616b5319a6410c0>

- a little more discussion of history of kelp surveys in the SJI's and decline over time

There's a maximum depth where eelgrass can be found. We ask boaters to anchor in water deeper than 25-35' in order not to impact eelgrass (voluntary boater education). Recent surveys have been looking at outer depth range of eelgrass around the County, those results should be out this fall. Frankie shows map layers - deepwater edge off eelgrass at Echo Bay in Sucia in the interactive habitat map – in Shallow Bay the eelgrass extends further into bay.

Craig: how well do satellite data compare with line-transect?

Frankie: the problem with satellite data is hard to predict what you'll get, cloud cover. There's another type of radar imagery that's expensive. We have 20 years of monitoring data from DNR, but need historical eelgrass data

Beth: these data are interesting and important. In my experience most of our eelgrass beds are fringing like in Echo Bay. Looking into the future about how to manage vessel traffic and anchoring, maintaining that boundary will be important. Maybe not ideal to anchor in 35' but that's what we need to do. We know where that boundary is

Joey: 30' is a good mark for where to leave your anchor, people often have 100' of scope.

Adam: a lot of vessels don't carry more than 100-150' rode so that limits the depth they can anchor in 30' max

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10:01 AM MRC Updates/Business

• OPALCO Tidal Energy Proposal/San Juan County Council Comments

Sam Whitridge

In early September, Sam presented MRC's initial report to the County Council, focused on the information we still needed in order to take a stance on the proposal. Council requested that I draft a letter that reflected the recommendations of the MRC. I shared that with the MRC, and it was submitted about a week ago.

We just received this response from OPALCO

10:05 AM - *Sam shares the letter on-screen, everyone takes several minutes to review it*

10:09 AM Discussion resumes

David: I found it a little defensive, I thought the letter from Council was in good faith trying to open a dialogue.

Charles: the Council's session was informative. Discussion centered on politics between County and OPALCO and not on the technical issues raised by the MRC. In this letter, they skipped over an important argument -that we need to see the technical results from deployment of the unit in Scotland. I don't see any efforts to address that.

Jane: For the last two MRC meetings I've been trying to encourage some dialogue with OPALCO about the project, so MRC can better understand the information and avoid putting them in a defensive position. I'm frustrated. I intend to speak with OPALCO about some of the concerns brought up by MRC. But I'm concerned I don't see a working relationship on issues of marine habitat. I'm interested in hearing what you think the MRC can constructively do to share more information in the Council. I fully supported the letter you drafted requesting information. And we need to fix this relationship, we need to be able to work with OPALCO on these critical issues

David: I agree that better dialogue is needed. My contact at OPALCO is willing to come talk to the MRC. It seems like creating a group that includes OPALCO and some of us and some of the climate sustainability people – getting together to talk about these facts on a regular basis. Meeting face to face in a relaxed environment. Please don't view OPALCO in an adversarial way, we're lucky to have them as our energy provider! But that doesn't preclude the need to be able to sit down and talk about energy into the future. We can't politicize it, it's too important

Adam: I think the defensiveness in the letter was about other attacks they've received like about some of the land-based projects. This may have been our first time asking for information, but they're braced for blowback. Having to defend themselves constantly is going to make them defensive. I love the idea of a larger group that could be created for OPALCO to have consistent communication with multiple groups

David: Comments have already been received from the Tribes, Friends, and numerous other entities

Kendra: There are several OPALCO board members on Climate and sustainability committee. Kendra provides examples of ways to help support OPALCO by providing land from Town/County for solar panels. Jane, I can help.

Kari: A problem I see is that OPALCO don't seem to communicate with the public early enough or very well

ACTION: Adam proposes a discussion at our next meeting about coming up with something to present to Council like this idea of a forum for OPALCO to communicate with other groups/agencies

Jane: thank you for that discussion. Let's see where we can take these ideas together in the coming weeks.

10:34 AM • MRC Youth Membership Interview Updates

Katie Johnson

Sandy: We recommend Lola from Orcas Island and Flora from SJI, Kailey can provide more details

Kailey: Flora is a senior at FHHS. All applicants were seniors. We hope they will stay on at least for the next year and we hope they'll stay on after that to fill the two-year requirement.

MOTION: Dave moves to recommend the two youth members join the MRC. Christina seconds

Now it goes to Council, in the meantime they can come and meet everyone & say a few words

10:38 AM • **MSA report progress**

Frankie: we have an approved resolution we'll take to Council next week to request their approval to adopt the MSA report and replace the 2007 report. That'll happen next Tuesday. If anyone's available to be there for the Council meeting, getting a resolution adopting this report is the final big hurdle to some great work from the MRC

Kendra: this is the time – if you want to make sure Council knows how much you care about the environment, any statement you can make in support of the work being done is important

Olivia: what's the best way to approach a Council person?

Frankie: write emails, letters, or go to Council in person or via Teams, at each meeting there's a public comment

Kendra: anything you can say around "thank you for supporting the marine program" is appreciated, about how important this work is. Frankie, you should give a presentation on the boat density work and relation to moorage

Frankie: We are presenting this resolution on Tuesday October 7th 9am meeting start with public comment shortly afterward, <https://www.sjcmrc.org/media/5iapjp32/state-of-the-msa-2024-1.pdf>

About the vessel and mooring buoy work, the County is sending a message out to mooring buoy owners on Monday surrounding the use of their recreational buoys. DNR has a letter under review that'll go out as well.

10:46 AM • 2025 MRC Retreat Early Planning

Sam Whitridge

We've held these in early December in lieu of our regular meeting. It looks like that would be December 4th.

Adam and Karin are interested in helping plan the Retreat

Sam: the main cost would be lunch; we pay that from our MRC grant

Christina: a main agenda item should be fundraising and looking at funding into the future.

- General approval for December 4th – we'll go forward with working on the agenda for the Retreat

10:50 AM • MRC subcommittee updates

o Outreach & Education

Katie Johnson

We've been discussing an idea for Orca Recovery Day, Saturday October 18th - something to highlight the 1000 yds distance from whales, we can call it the 'dash for whales'; It's just a half mile. The race would start at 10:30, over by 11, and then an hour of table/presentation. Encourage everyone to bring their 'pod' (kids/families/friends).

- CD is ready to participate – Paul says it will be mandatory. Frankie reviews several other participants

Kendra: What about doing it on Jackson beach? either as a run, swim, or paddle??

- More discussion of location, the Gravel Pit vs. Jackson Beach. General consensus settles on Jackson Beach.

Need to speak with Port, already checked in with Island Rec.

Rich: I'm not aware of any conflicting events, talk to Todd down at the Port. Jackson has a wooden whale!

ACTION: Katie and Frankie will connect on this; Adam wants to help with planning

Marta: recommend contacting Commodore of FH Sailing Club Sam Johnston (salmon_sandy@msn.com)

Rich: Here you go Frankie, Todd Nicholson , Port Director 360-378-2688, 226

11:00 AM o Plastic Free Salish Sea

Karin Roemers-Kleven/Katie Johnson

Katie: GICU (Great Islands Clean Up) happening this Saturday on four main ferry-served islands. Check out PFSS site for event details on your island. On SJI we'll meeting at Jackson, great nurdle hunt and sending folks out to other places. Sonora has done some great promotional videos. We'll talk about covering your load

Christina: any traction on getting a group to do some clean up at Orcas landing?

ACTION: Katie will reach out to Pete and see if they can get a crew going there

Christina: it may be a way to address some of the maintenance issues Kendra brought up before

Karin: did you get any response to the garden club?

Christina: I reached out, they were going to talk to their executive committee. I asked about plant maintenance – some of them are concerned about the steep slope there, they have older volunteers.

Joey: I am in the process of getting an Orcas Landing group together now. I will reach out to you Katie to confirm.

11:03 AM o Seagrass Protection

Beth Tate/Katie Johnson

Olivia: the kelp soiree was fun, so many familiar and new faces from the marine community. Kari did a stunning job with kelp drinks & pickles, lively & festive. And now I hope we can do a seagrass soiree sometime!

11:04 AM o Derelict Vessel Prevention

Adam Parrott/Kari Koski

Sonora and Kari are putting out information about fall storms coming up. Marine patrols are scheduled starting next week – derelict vessel patrols, mooring buoy monitoring. Heavy schedule over next few months

Adam is interested, anyone interested in participating should contact Frankie

o Oil Spill/ERTV

Sam Whitridge

I'll work with Lovel to set up a subcommittee meeting when she gets back

11:07 AM **Adjourn MRC Meeting**

11:15 AM **Convene CAG Meeting**

11:16 AM **CAG Updates/Business**

Sam Whitridge

- **Report out on September SRFB Meeting**

Three projects (The SJPT outer islands, Friends of San Juans' Upright Head, and the Land Bank's Coho Reserve) were all approved. RCO (Recreational Conservation Office) in process of securing funds, and work can start this fall.

- **Update on status of Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery Funding (PCSRF)**

We learned a couple weeks ago that PCSRF came through. It seemed like potentially those funds wouldn't be released before sept 30 deadline, and amazingly RCO received the funds by sept 18th – 22 million.

That means full funding for the 2025 State salmon grant round that we just completed. Good news, means State doesn't need to borrow funds from next year's grant round to fund this year's

- One more quick item, annual salmon recovery meeting next week in Leavenworth, I'll attend and represent SJC.

It'll be good to get a broader picture and network with others from around the State, some valuable workshops

- This is the slow season with salmon recovery, but we'll pick up later this year, hope for a big grant round next year with PSAR funding Puget sound acquisition and research funds

11:20 PM **Adjourn CAG Meeting**