

**Snohomish County
Marine Resources Advisory Committee (MRC)**

**Annual Report to Snohomish County
Council and Executive**

July 29, 2004

Background

Snohomish County Ordinance 99-080, which established the Snohomish County Marine Resources Advisory Committee (MRC), requires the MRC to provide annual reports to the Snohomish County Council and Executive. This annual report presents the Snohomish County MRC's 2003 accomplishments, 2004 activities, strategic vision, recommendations, financial summary, and acknowledgement of MRC partners.

The Snohomish County MRC was established in 1999 to advise Snohomish County on how to conserve the local marine environment. The Snohomish County MRC is composed of eleven citizen members who represent a broad range of interests. The MRC participates in the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative, a non-partisan regional effort to protect and restore marine resources in northern Puget Sound and the Strait of Juan de Fuca. A 13-person Northwest Straits Commission coordinates the efforts of the seven participating counties, which include Snohomish, Skagit, Whatcom, San Juan, Island, Jefferson, and Clallam. Each MRC has one representative on the Northwest Straits Commission. The Northwest Straits Commission strives to complement, rather than duplicate, efforts of existing agencies and organizations (<http://nwstraits.org>). Staff support for the Snohomish County MRC is provided by the Surface Water Management Division of the Public Works Department.

Since its first meeting in January 2000, the Snohomish County MRC has held monthly meetings to address local marine resource issues. In its first year, the MRC focused on educating itself on a wide range of locally relevant marine resource issues. In its second year, the MRC identified Dungeness crab stewardship, nearshore habitat restoration, and public involvement and education as its top priorities and initiated local priority-driven projects. In 2003, the MRC completed a Dungeness crab stewardship plan for Snohomish County and implemented a nearshore restoration pilot project at Kayak Point in north Snohomish County. In 2004, the MRC is sponsoring a survey of juvenile crab habitat and a nearshore restoration project at Picnic Point in south Snohomish County. Every year since 2000, the MRC has also maintained a core set of public involvement and education activities.

Many of the recommendations presented in this report are action-oriented and can be implemented by Snohomish County's Surface Water Management Division of Public Works using financial support from the Northwest Straits Commission. Some actions can be carried out by MRC partners, such as the Tulalip Tribes and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). Some of the recommendations are policy oriented and are intended for consideration by the Snohomish County Council and Executive. In particular, the MRC recommends reauthorization of the MRC enabling ordinance, which sunsets September 22, 2004.

2003 Accomplishments

In 2003 the MRC continued successful programs from previous years and implemented several new initiatives to address priority marine issues. The major accomplishments for 2003 are listed below.

Public Involvement and Education

1. Provided marine education to more than 400 people at MRC-sponsored Beach Expos conducted at Brackett's Landing, Mukilteo State Park, and Jetty Island.
2. Led 4 beach walks for over 200 local elementary and middle school students.
3. Partnered with the UW Friday Harbor Research Labs and local high school students to produce underwater video of Port Gardner and Port Susan using a remotely operated vehicle (ROV) from the RV/*Centennial*.
4. Participated in the Cedar-Sammamish Watershed (WRIA 8) nearshore boat tour.
5. Incorporated marine issues into the Snohomish County Watershed Keeper course.
6. Maintained the MRC web site and library for public information (<http://mrc.surfacewater.info>).
7. Participated in the Northwest Straits Commission's monthly meetings and annual conference.

Dungeness Crab Stewardship

1. Completed and began implementing elements of the *Proposed Dungeness Crab Stewardship Plan for Snohomish County*.
2. Solidified partnerships with shellfish management staff from Tulalip Tribes and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).
3. Posted the results of the Port Susan derelict fishing gear survey and removal project, which was funded by the Stillaguamish Tribe, on the MRC web site.
4. Started planning for a juvenile Dungeness crab habitat survey to be completed in 2004.

Nearshore Habitat Protection and Restoration

1. Continued participation in the Northwest Straits Regional Forage Fish Survey Program.
2. Recruited local volunteers for summer and winter forage fish spawning habitat surveys by WDFW along the Snohomish County marine shoreline.
3. Planted native marine riparian vegetation in experimental plots at Kayak Point Regional County Park.
4. Began developing a technical assistance program for private marine shore property owners to replace existing bulkheads with softer shoreline protection alternatives.
5. Developed a successful proposal in collaboration with the Snohomish County Parks and Recreation Department for nearshore restoration at Picnic Point County Park.

Data Compilation and Analysis

1. Mapped overwater structures along the marine shoreline.
2. Designed and began implementing a methodology for identifying candidate sites for marine nearshore protection and restoration in Snohomish County.
3. Participated in nearshore salmon recovery workshops for the Stillaguamish, Snohomish, and Cedar-Sammamish Watersheds.

2004 Activities

In 2004, the MRC is continuing successful programs for Dungeness crab stewardship, nearshore habitat conservation, and public involvement and education. The work plan for this year includes a nearshore habitat restoration project at Picnic Point Regional County Park, production of a final report for the nearshore candidate sites analysis project, and start-up of the juvenile crab habitat survey.

Public Involvement and Education

1. Participated in the independent five-year evaluation of the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative.
2. Led a marine debris beach survey and clean-up pilot project with University of Washington students at Meadowdale, Picnic Point, and Mukilteo parks.
3. Participated in the Northwest Straits Conference at the Everett Events Center, June 4-5.
4. Organized Beach Expos with guided beach walks at Kayak Point, Mukilteo, and Jetty Island parks.
5. Working with Everett High School students to produce a short MRC video with highlights from the 2003 RV/*Centennial* cruise.
6. Maintaining the MRC website and library.
7. Providing marine resource presentations to interested groups.

Dungeness Crab Stewardship

1. Posted crab stewardship posters at beaches in Edmonds and Mukilteo.
2. Coordinating with WDFW for acquisition and analysis of 2003-04 crab harvest data.
3. Coordinating with WDFW and Tulalip Tribes for design and implementation of the juvenile Dungeness crab habitat survey and productivity assessment.
4. Coordinating with the Northwest Straits Commission for derelict fishing gear survey and removal in Port Gardner.
5. Planning to conduct annual performance review of the *Proposed Dungeness Crab Stewardship Plan for Snohomish County*.

Nearshore Habitat Protection and Restoration

1. Completing the Kayak Point Nearshore Pilot Project, including development and installation of six interpretive signs.
2. Implementing the Picnic Point Nearshore Restoration Project.
3. Monitoring the marine riparian enhancement plantings at Kayak Point.

Data Compilation and Analysis

1. Contributed nearshore candidate site information to the Stillaguamish, Snohomish, and Cedar-Sammamish salmon recovery plans.
2. Soliciting input from stakeholders for the nearshore candidate sites analysis.
3. Writing final report for the nearshore candidate sites analysis.
4. Compiling marine and nearshore data for integration with Snohomish County's Geographic Information System (GIS).

Strategic Vision

In preparing for re-enactment of the MRC authorizing ordinance, the MRC reviewed its work to date and developed a strategic vision to guide local marine resource conservation efforts for the next five years and the next twenty years. These five- and twenty-year strategic visions are summarized below. Our strategic vision is a work in progress and we expect to adjust it as we move forward and as we receive feedback from the Northwest Straits Commission, which is conducting a similar strategic planning effort this summer.

Within the next five years the MRC would like to see the following outcomes:

- Increased collaboration with partners to address marine resource issues
- Increased MRC advisory communication with Snohomish County Council and Executive
- Continued public involvement and education functions
- Establishment of the MRC as the “information center” for marine conservation in Snohomish County
- Increased scientific research and monitoring of marine resources in Snohomish County
- Increased MRC focus on marine water quality, shellfish, and shore birds
- Continued or increased effort on Dungeness crab stewardship
- Increased stewardship of other marine resources, such as forage fish
- Restoration or enhancement of nearshore habitat on private property
- Greater overall effort on marine resource stewardship in Snohomish County by increasing MRC budget and/or focusing the efforts of outside organizations to accomplish the MRC work plan

Within the next twenty years the MRC would like to see the following outcomes:

- Measurable benefits are observed from the MRC’s conservation actions
- Documentation of the history of marine resource conditions in Snohomish County
- No net loss of marine resources
- More self-sufficient local marine resource activities that are not necessarily MRC-funded
- A Snohomish County marine resource stewardship office to implement marine resource programs
- The Snohomish County Council and Executive routinely seek advice on marine resource issues from the MRC

These five- and twenty-year strategic visions are ambitious and to fulfill them will require a greater level of effort, in terms of staffing and funding. Currently, MRC staff support is about 1.0 FTE. This level of staffing is funded by approximately \$60,000/year in annual grants from the Northwest Straits Commission and \$30,000/year from the Snohomish County General Fund. This staffing level supports daily administrative functions and small-scale actions to implement MRC recommendations. These actions have been positive, but many of the MRC’s recommendations are more ambitious and cannot be implemented without greater investment.

Although there are additional grant opportunities that could fund scaled-up MRC actions, staff time has not been available to pursue these grants. For this reason the MRC has tried to maximize its efforts by seeking opportunities to dovetail marine resource conservation projects

with other Snohomish County projects or the efforts of other organizations. For example, the Picnic Point Restoration Project builds on Snohomish County's Drainage Needs Report by funding feasibility and design work that is needed for that site. The juvenile crab habitat survey dovetails with harvest management work of WDFW and the Tulalip Tribes. Similarly, the Snohomish County Beach Watchers Program proposed this year by Washington State University (WSU) Extension is endorsed by the MRC because a trained group of Beach Watcher volunteers could implement many of the actions sponsored or recommended by the MRC.

The MRC is somewhat unique as a Snohomish County advisory committee because it has substantial influence over actions that are implemented by Snohomish County with funding from the Northwest Straits Commission. This fall, Snohomish County staff will once again work with the MRC to prepare the annual action grant proposal to the Northwest Straits Commission. The scope of work in this proposal will largely shape the MRC's 2005 work plan. This effort represents the MRC's first step toward achieving its strategic vision. As the MRC prepares for reauthorization and continuation of its function to advise Snohomish County on local marine resource conservation, it is examining how it allocates its effort between providing advice and organizing action.

Recommendations to Snohomish County

The following recommendations are presented for consideration by the Snohomish County Council and Executive. These include actions that Council and/or the Executive should take as well as requests for support on a variety of current and potential MRC activities. The MRC welcomes further discussion of these recommendations.

Public Involvement and Education

1. Establish a Snohomish County Beach Watchers Program through WSU Extension.
2. Support the following MRC activities:
 - a. Involve more citizens in marine resource monitoring opportunities.
 - b. Implement the Shore Stewards Program, developed by WSU Extension, to promote marine resource stewardship by marine shore property owners.
 - c. Expand partnerships with local schools, City of Edmonds Beach Rangers, City of Everett Park Rangers, and others.
 - d. Explore partnership opportunities with Everett Community College, Naval Station Everett, Port of Everett, and neighboring MRCs.
 - e. Coordinate with WDFW to increase compliance with shellfish harvest regulations.
 - f. Continue the Snohomish County MRC Beach Expos.
 - g. Continue maintenance of MRC web site and library.
 - h. Coordinate the International Coastal Cleanup campaign in Snohomish County.

Dungeness Crab Stewardship

1. Support the following MRC activities:
 - a. Review the *Proposed Dungeness Crab Stewardship Plan for Snohomish County* and determine how it can be adopted by the County.
 - b. Complete the juvenile crab habitat survey and productivity assessment.

- c. Identify potential priority sites for Dungeness crab nursery and gravid female habitat.
- d. Continue coordinating with the Northwest Straits Commission on derelict fishing gear survey and removal in Snohomish County.
- e. Increase public awareness of crab and shellfish harvesting issues by posting information at public shoreline locations.
- f. Monitor Dungeness crab harvest management, including WDFW's annual sport rule adoption process.
- g. Participate in deliberations of WDFW's Puget Sound Crab Advisory Board.
- h. Coordinate with WDFW to support green crab monitoring by volunteers.

Nearshore Habitat Protection and Restoration

- 1. Ensure that marine shoreline development projects in Snohomish County are coordinated with respect to mitigation of comprehensive and cumulative effects on our shoreline and marine resources.
- 2. Support Sound Transit's effort to replace railroad stream crossing culverts with trestle bridges along the south Snohomish County marine shoreline.
- 3. Support the following MRC activities:
 - a. Provide technical assistance to marine shore property owners to reduce the impact of armoring and development.
 - b. Design and implement nearshore habitat restoration capital projects, especially soft shore protection demonstration projects.
 - c. Remove creosote logs from public beaches.
 - d. Participate in ongoing efforts to control the non-native invasive plant, *Spartina*.
 - e. Monitor and maintain marine riparian enhancement sites at Kayak Point and Picnic Point.

Marine Water Quality

- 1. Monitor the development of Washington State administrative rules that will implement new legislation for on-water fueling spill prevention.
- 2. Support the following MRC activities:
 - a. Participate in the Beach Environmental Assessment, Communication, and Health (BEACH) Program by monitoring water quality at public saltwater beaches.
 - b. Examine existing marine water quality conditions.
 - c. Examine the threat of oil spills to Snohomish County marine resources.
 - d. Examine the extent and impact of marine debris.

Data Compilation and Analysis

- 1. Support the following MRC activities:
 - a. Analyze annual Dungeness crab harvest data.
 - b. Map the locations and extent of submerged aquatic vegetation.
 - c. Compile and analyze data on Snohomish County marine currents.
 - d. Analyze existing marine water quality data.
 - e. Assess the condition of Puget Sound tributary stream outfalls.

General Operations

1. Reauthorize the MRC by approving a motion to re-enact and codify Snohomish County Ordinance 99-080.
2. Support reauthorization and federal funding of the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative.
3. Enable the MRC to fulfill its purpose by maintaining or increasing staff support for scientific, outreach, and planning assistance.
4. Prioritize marine resource stewardship in departmental work plans, budget development, and local and regional initiatives, such as transportation and economic development.

Financial Summary

MRC activities are funded primarily by non-competitive MRC administration and action grants from the Northwest Straits Commission. The source of these grants is Coastal Zone Management 310 funds administered by the Washington Department of Ecology. MRC Administration grants have consistently been \$10,000 per year. MRC action grants have varied from \$30,000 to \$70,000 per year since 2001 with an average of \$50,000 per year. From 1999 through 2004 Snohomish County received \$260,000 in federal grant support for the MRC. Federal funding of the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative has been approved for 2005 and the Northwest Straits Commission expects \$10,000 and \$50,000 grants will again be available for MRC administration and action projects.

Long term federal funding for the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative is not guaranteed, but the Initiative has been quite successful and has leveraged significant non-federal resources in support of marine conservation for the Northwest Straits region. Recommendations from the Five-Year Independent Evaluation completed in April 2004 call for reauthorizing the Initiative for another 8 to 10 years and doubling the amount of federal grant support to each of the seven participating counties. Therefore, it is possible that federal funding for the Initiative could increase beginning in 2006.

From 2001 through 2004 Snohomish County allocated \$134,000 to the MRC from the general fund, with an average of \$33,500 per year. The \$134,000 that Snohomish County has invested in the MRC over the past four years leveraged approximately \$400,000 in grants, gifts, and in-kind support.

Acknowledgements

The accomplishments and current activities of the Snohomish County MRC depend on contributions from volunteers, Snohomish County staff members, and people from other organizations. Many of our MRC partners are listed below. Their interest and participation in MRC activities is greatly appreciated. We apologize for any omissions.

Public Involvement and Education

Alice Blandin, Camano Island Beach Watchers

Michele Boyd, Westgate Elementary, Edmonds School District
Owen Caddy, City of Edmonds Beach Rangers
John Custer, Camano Island Beach Watchers
David Duggins, UW Friday Harbor Research Labs
Kraig Hansen, City of Everett Parks Department
Nancy Hasler, Totem Falls Elementary, Snohomish School District
Sally Lider, City of Edmonds Beach Rangers
Cynthia McIntyre, Everett High School
Curt Moulton, Snohomish County/WSU Extension
Kirby Schaufler, Cedarcrest Middle School, Marysville School District

Dungeness Crab Stewardship

Hilary Culverwell, Puget Sound Action Team
Paul Dinnel, Skagit MRC/Shannon Point Marine Center
Jennifer Hernandez, University of Washington
Bruce Higgins, Edmonds Underwater Park
Mike McHugh, Tulalip Tribes
David Meister, WDFW
Don Velasquez, WDFW

Nearshore Habitat Protection and Restoration

Julie Langabeer, Priest Point Resident
Doug Meyers, Puget Sound Action Team
Hugh Shipman, Washington Department of Ecology

Data Compilation and Analysis

Betty Bookheim, Washington Department of Natural Resources
Duane Bowman, City of Edmonds
Paul Crane, City of Everett
Cinde Donoghue, Washington Department of Ecology
Dennis Gregoire, Port of Everett
Jon Houghton, Pentec Environmental
Dan Mathias, City of Everett
Peter Namtvedt Best, City of Bainbridge Island
Dan Penttila, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Allison Reak, Landau Associates
Darren Syverson, Survey Volunteer
Paul Szewczykowski, Survey Volunteer
Curtis Tanner, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Chris Townsend, Sound Transit
Jacques White, The Nature Conservancy
Gary Wood, Island County MRC/Regional Forage Fish Coordinator
Todd Zackey, Tulalip Tribes

Snohomish County Staff Members

Public Works Department, Surface Water Management Division

Bob Aldrich, Watershed Steward
Suzy Brunzell, GIS Analyst
Sean Edwards, Associate Planner/MRC Lead Staff
Jake Jacobson, Watershed Steward
Linda Lyshall, Intern
Scott Moore, Native Plant Steward
Meg Moorehead, Salmon Recovery Program Manager
Martha Neuman, Senior Planner
Ted Parker, Habitat Technician
Lynda Ransley, Community Partners Supervisor
Suzi Wong Swint, Senior Planner/Watershed Educator

Parks and Recreation Department

Jeanne Blackburn, Park Ranger/Kayak Point
Jack Davidson, Senior Park Ranger/Kayak Point
Doug Dailer, Park Ranger/Meadowdale Beach
Pat Kenyon, Principal Park Planner
Dale Kolbe, Habitat Steward
Sharon Walker, Senior Park Planner

Snohomish County MRC Members

Larry Adamson, Snohomish County Planning and Development Services, Code Division
Manager
Mary Cunningham, City of Everett Planning and Community Development, Senior Planner
Ed Goodridge, Sr., Stillaguamish Tribe, Tribal Chairman and Fisheries Manager (Alternate: Jen
Sevigny, Wildlife Biologist)
Kirby Johnson, MRC Vice Chair, Northwest Straits Commission Member, and Boeing Engineer
Charles Lanasa, Bestworth-Rommel, Manager
Dawn Lawrence, Mariner High School, Biology Teacher
Heather McCartney, City of Mukilteo, Planning Director
Alan Mearns, Ph.D., National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Marine Biologist
Chet Motekaitis, Recreational Boat Safety Consultant
Kent Scudder, Ph.D., Real Estate Analyst
Sally van Niel, Pilchuck Audubon Society, President
Daryl Williams, MRC Chair and Tulalip Tribes Environmental Liaison

Former MRC Members

John Davis, Recreational Boater (resigned December, 2003)
Paul Roberts, City of Everett Planning and Community Development, Planning Director
(resigned January, 2004)
Liz Greenhagen, City of Everett Planning and Community Development, Environmental Planner
(MRC alternate for City of Everett until April, 2004)