



Marine Resources Committee 2019 Annual Report

Restore, Conserve, Educate



Snohomish County
Marine Resources
Committee



Snohomish County
Public Works
Surface Water Management

Snohomish County Marine Resources Committee

2019 Annual Report

Snohomish County
Marine Resources Advisory Committee
3000 Rockefeller Avenue, M/S-607
Everett, WA 98201

The Snohomish MRC is a service provided by the
Snohomish County Surface Water Management Division

Questions or comments about the MRC can be directed to:

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Senior Planner, Marine Resources Committee Staff
425-388-6466
Elisa.Dawson@snoco.org

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It is Snohomish County's policy to assure that no person shall on the grounds of race, color, national origin, or sex, as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be discriminated against under any county sponsored program or activity. For questions regarding Snohomish County Public Works' Title VI Program, or for interpreter or translation services for non-English speakers, or otherwise making materials available in an alternate format, contact the Department Title VI Coordinator via email at spw-titlevi@snoco.org or phone 425-388-6660. Hearing/speech impaired may call 711.

Información sobre el Título VI y sobre la Ley de Americanos con Discapacidades

(ADA por sus siglas en inglés): Es la política del Condado de Snohomish asegurar que ninguna persona sea excluida de participar, se le nieguen beneficios o se le discrimine de alguna otra manera en cualquier programa o actividad patrocinada por el Condado de Snohomish en razón de raza, color, país de origen o género, conforme al Título VI de la Enmienda a la Ley de Derechos Civiles de 1964. Comuníquese con el Department Title VI Coordinator (Coordinador del Título VI del Departamento) al correo electrónico spw-titlevi@snoco.org, o al teléfono 425-388-6660 si tiene preguntas referentes al Snohomish County Public Works' Title VI Program (Programa del Título VI de Obras Publicas del Condado de Snohomish), o para servicios de interpretación o traducción para los no angloparlantes, o para pedir que los materiales se hagan disponibles en un formato alternativo. Los que tienen necesidades comunicativas especiales pueden llamar al 711.

Message from Chair, Mike Ehlebracht



With all of the climate and development pressures impacting our precious Salish Sea, the Snohomish County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) has completed an extensive list of actions to improve the health of our marine ecosystem for our local citizens and the beloved wildlife who depend on it. As you read through our annual report, you'll see how our team of 12 dedicated volunteers, two Snohomish County Surface Water Management staff, and our many partners have worked together on restoration, conservation, and education projects that help protect our waters and boost critical marine wildlife such as our iconic Southern Resident Killer Whales and salmon populations.

These projects include conducting fishing and crabber education to reduce the impacts of derelict fishing gear that kill thousands of marine organisms each year; identifying and eliminating sources of contamination through derelict boat removal, oil spill preparation, creosote pile identification and prioritization, and mussel contaminant monitoring; restoring nearshore habitat through beach nourishment; and monitoring the health of our local marine waters through forage fish and kelp surveys.

While this report celebrates our accomplishments of 2019, I encourage you to get involved and join our citizen scientists and volunteers to help protect and restore our Salish Sea for future generations.

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Established in 1999 and authorized by Chapter 2.800 of the Snohomish County Code; the Snohomish Marine Resources Committee members represent a diverse group of environmental, recreational, conservation, economic, and local and tribal government interests.

The Snohomish County MRC is a team of citizen volunteers who are appointed by the Snohomish County Council and congressionally authorized to represent diverse local interests. Advocating for communities, the MRC provides sound guidance to public officials as an advisory committee. The MRC is essential to the protection and restoration of Snohomish County's marine environment. Without the partnerships or funding support from native tribes, government, businesses, and non-profit organizations the MRC could not continue this crucial work.

The MRC is guided by the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative (NWSI) Strategic Plan. Together these entities comprise a nonpartisan regional effort to protect and restore marine resources in the northern Puget Sound and the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

"Promoting effective stewardship of Snohomish County's marine waters."

12 Committee members



Science workgroups with MRC representation

27



Outreach events



6

Media releases



5

12 Trainings & conferences attended



Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative



Snohomish County
Marine Resources
Committee



Northwest
Straits
FOUNDATION

Celebrating 20 Years

In 2019 the MRC celebrated 20 years of working to protect and restore our marine resources in Snohomish County. Over the last two decades volunteers have donated an estimated 30,000 hours to help further our mission. The MRC could not have been as successful without the help of the more than 40 people who have served as members. We are proud of what we have accomplished, including the following highlights:

- Educated more than 12,000 recreational crabbers at public boat launches to prevent derelict crab pots.
- Removed 1,083 crab pots from Port Gardner over the past ten years.
- Received designation for the Port Susan Stewardship Area.
- Restored 4.5 miles of nearshore habitat between Mukilteo and Everett.

As we look forward to the next 20 years, one of the focus areas for the committee will be to inventory the 10,000+ creosote pilings in the Snohomish Estuary and develop a prioritization plan for their removal.



Thank You for Your Service

The MRC would like to thank Kathleen Pozarycki for her exceptional work during the past 10 years as MRC Lead Staff! She has been instrumental in the development and implementation of the committee's plans, projects, and on-going programs. Her unwavering dedication and commitment to the mission and goals of the MRC has been exemplary. As she steps into her new role at Snohomish County Surface Water Management as the Local Integrating Organization Coordinator, we wish her luck and hope for her continued success.



Kathleen Pozarycki served as Lead Staff for the MRC from 2009-2019

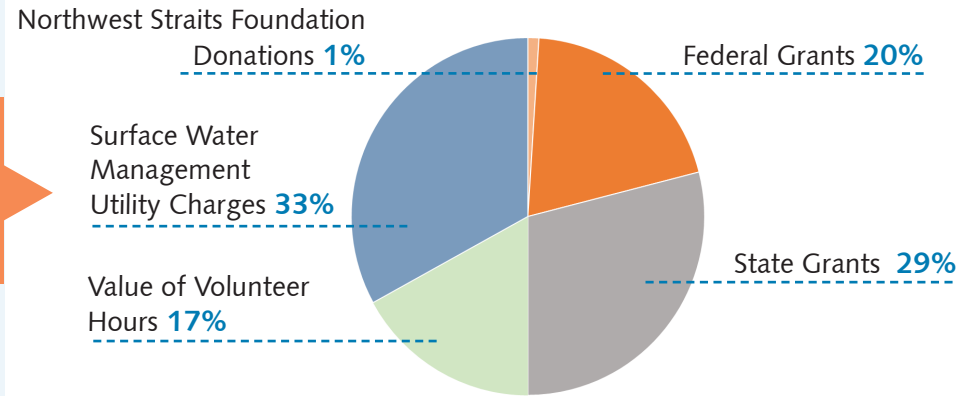
MRC members took a boat tour of completed projects to mark the committee's 20th anniversary. Here members are looking at the Nearshore Restoration project that was completed in 2017.

Program Support

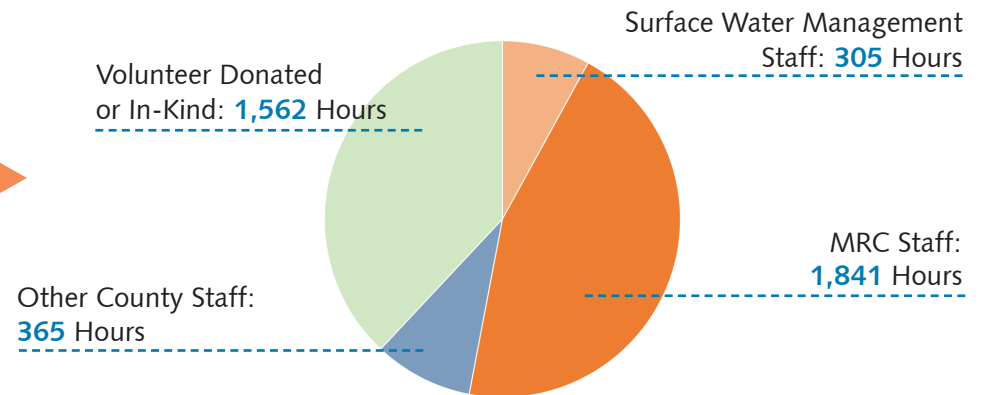
There were 1,562 professional hours donated by 12 MRC members in 2019 to implement MRC's 2019 work plan and related activities which:

- o Provided a forum to mobilize citizen support of marine conservation.
- o Generated and implemented practical, on-the-ground projects that benefit the ecosystem and the economy of our region.

FUNDING



SUPPORT



\$31.72
Washington State's estimated value of a volunteer hour.



1,562
Professional hours donated in 2019.

\$49,546.64
Total value to Snohomish County



Kayak Point Beach

Meadowdale Beach Park Restoration

WHAT: Meadowdale Beach Park is a 108-acre park located in unincorporated Snohomish County. The park's hike-in only access trail winds through a ravine alongside Lund's Gulch Creek to Puget Sound. Park visitors access the beach by way of a six-foot-wide concrete box culvert under the railroad. This culvert also conveys the year-round flow of Lund's Gulch Creek.

WHY: Due to the narrow opening of the culvert, sediment carried by the creek accumulates in the passageway. This causes frequent flooding in the culvert that restricts beach access for park visitors and limits salmon use of the creek.

PROPOSED ACTION: [The Meadowdale Beach Park and Estuary Restoration Project](#) proposes the construction of a 130 foot, five-span railroad bridge to replace the existing culvert and enhance beach access and stream flow. The project will create two acres of restored estuary and riparian habitat to provide critical habitat for juvenile Chinook salmon.

The Snohomish MRC continues to assist the Snohomish County Parks Department by finding funds and talking to political leaders about the importance of this project. Restoration efforts will benefit salmon, the shoreline ecosystem, and our local community.

On December 3, 2019 - Governor Inslee's staff visited Meadowdale Beach Park to discuss a funding strategy



Project Receives Funding

The Meadowdale Beach Park project was awarded a \$3.5 million federal grant and \$200,000 from county Surface Water Management utility charges. Funds will improve visitor and fish access by replacing an old railroad embankment with a new bridge and restoring two acres of fish habitat.



On September 25, the MRC visited Meadowdale during their Boat Tour of Restoration Projects

RESTORE

The Snohomish County MRC is committed to restoring our marine and nearshore habitat and striving for net gains in the quality of habitat and resources, while improving public access to shoreline.



Snohomish County Staff Kathleen Pozarycki posts a notice for removal on a derelict sailboat in the Snohomish Estuary. Photo Credit: Andy Bronson, The Herald.

Derelict Vessel Removal

Three derelict vessels were removed in 2019 from the Snohomish Estuary. Funding for this work was provided by the Washington Department of Natural Resources, the City of Everett, and Snohomish County Surface Water Management. Removing derelict vessels helps improve water quality and habitat by removing toxins and physical barriers. All derelict vessels were recycled or destroyed following a process to identify and work with the last known owners in accordance with Washington Administrative Code. For more information, visit the MRC's [webpage](#) on this project.

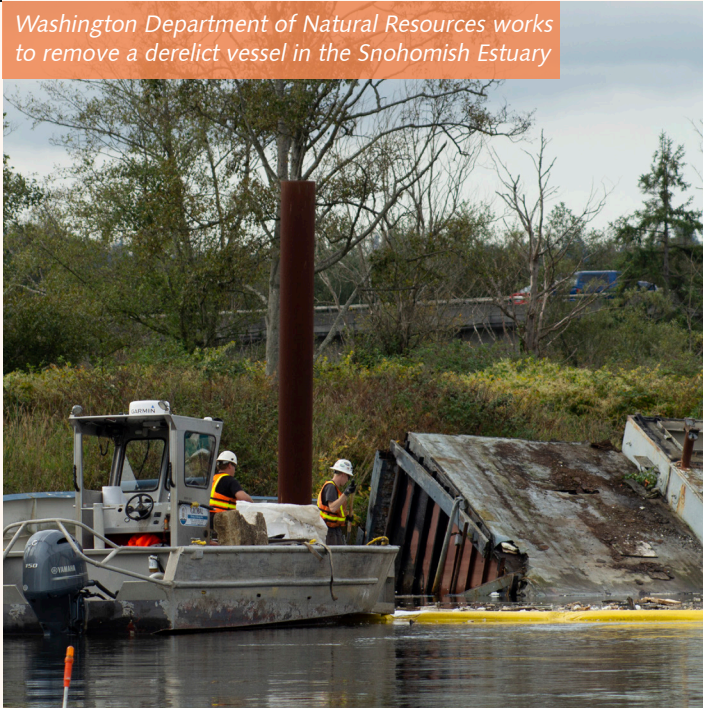
2019 Headlines



Officials hope to keep abandoned vessels out of Snohomish River



State could seize 100-foot boat stuck in Snohomish River



Washington Department of Natural Resources works to remove a derelict vessel in the Snohomish Estuary



3

3 derelict vessels removed

Sometimes the easiest way to conserve vulnerable habitat is to protect it. This involves knowing how much habitat you have in order to measure its decline or recovery. The Snohomish County MRC assists state and federal agencies by helping collect baseline and monitoring data for species or habitats of concern.

Kelp Monitoring

In response to concerns about declining bull kelp populations in some parts of the Puget Sound, and mounting interest in kelp restoration, the MRC gathered data for the Northwest Straits Commission's Regional Kelp monitoring project. The [MRC kayak surveys](#) cover the entire southern portion of the Snohomish County Nearshore from the Snohomish/King County border to the Snohomish River Delta and around Hat Island.

- Watch the [Kelp Monitoring Video](#) on the MRC website to learn more.



MRC Members on kayaks monitor kelp by taking notes, photos and adding GPS tracking details

Spotlight:

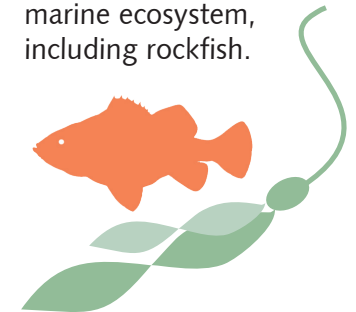
Bull Kelp is the largest of the 23 native species of large brown algae reaching 60' or more.



The kelp monitoring done by MRC volunteers and staff show an important trend in kelp canopy and beds over time. This information can help lead to science-based decisions on how to manage this resource. It is important to continue this monitoring effort annually.



Bull kelp forests provide **food and shelter** to dozens of species in our marine ecosystem, including rockfish.



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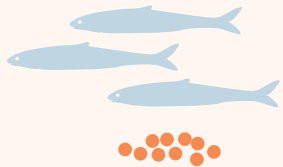
▶ Forage Fish Spawning Surveys

In conjunction with the [Nearshore Restoration Project](#), the MRC has conducted pre- and post-restoration monitoring of forage fish spawning since 2011 at 14 locations within the project reach between Mukilteo and Everett. Forage fish species, including Pacific sand lance and surf smelt play a vital role in the marine food web by providing food for salmon as well as other birds, mammals, and fish. Forage fish depend on the [nearshore](#) area for spawning and rearing. The MRC forage fish spawning surveys use [Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's](#) (WDFW) protocols focusing on surf smelt and Pacific sand lance, which lay eggs on intertidal sand-gravel beaches in the nearshore environment.

MRC volunteers collected sediment samples, which were winnowed, processed, and examined to look for eggs. This information is used to quantify spawning abundance and for scientific evaluations of spawning sites.

Spotlight:

[Forage fish](#) are an important food source for birds, salmon, orcas, and other animals. Their presence is considered a good indicator of a healthy marine ecosystem. Continued forage fish monitoring is necessary to determine the effectiveness of restoration projects.



The MRC took 90 [forage fish](#) samples at 14 different locations over 12 days of monitoring. In 2019, eggs were found at 13 out of 14 sites.



On top is an adult surf smelt; below is an adult Pacific sand lance

MRC Members take samples of sand, where forage fish lay their eggs. These samples are put under a microscope to look for the eggs.



▶ Caged Mussel Study, Deployment October 28, 2019

Stormwater runoff from urban areas is considered one of the biggest contributors to water pollution and can have serious impacts on the health of Puget Sound. The MRC partnered with the [Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife](#) (WDFW) to use caged native mussels to monitor the presence of pollutants in the nearshore urban environment.

The MRC assisted with [deploying cages](#) at 9 locations in Snohomish County:

- Meadowdale Beach
- Mukilteo Ferry
- Everett Harbor
- Naketa Beach
- Kayak Point
- Hermosa Point
- Edmonds Marina Beach Park
- Edmonds Olympic Beach
- Edmonds Brackett's Landing

▶ Oil Spill Preparedness

A large oil spill in county waters could significantly damage important environmental and economic resources. The [MRC Oil Spill Preparedness Subcommittee](#) works to build interagency relationships vital to successful spill prevention, preparedness, and response in Snohomish County and the Puget Sound region.

In 2019, the MRC assisted with updating four Oil Spill Geographic Response Plans with the Department of Ecology.

- Central Geographic Response Plan
- Admiralty Inlet Geographic Response Plan
- North Sound Geographic Response Plan
- Snohomish Estuary Geographic Response Plan

Geographic Response Plans are made up of pre-identified strategies for specific areas of the state at risk from oil spills. The strategies are designed to minimize impacts to sensitive environmental, cultural, and economic resources.



Caged mussels are safely anchored in the Sound and retrieved 3 months later for pollutant analysis.

2019 Orca Workshop

In 2019, the Snohomish MRC partnered with the Northwest Straits Foundation, the Snohomish Conservation District, and the City of Mukilteo to host a workshop on Orca Whales. Two expert speakers discussed the current impacts to Orcas, and how citizens can play a role in their recovery. Over 100 people attended the workshop.

In addition, the MRC developed their campaign "[8 Things You can Do to Help Save the Orcas](#)." Posters, bookmarks, and a website were created to help spread the word.



8 things you can do to help save the Orcas



Develop an appreciation for the Salish Sea and beyond

Download the [MyCoast](#) Smartphone App and become a citizen scientist and help document the status of our beaches. Become a [Snohomish County Beach Watcher](#). Take the kids on a [naturalist-led tide pool trip](#).



Switch to natural cleaners

Make your own natural cleaning products at home with these easy recipes: [Green Cleaning booklet](#). Read labels and avoid buying products with the terms CAUTION, WARNING, DANGER or POISON on them.



Reduce your use of plastic

Use reusable grocery bags, food storage, and water bottles. Check out [Zero Waste Washington](#) for more ideas on how to reduce, reuse, repair and repurpose. See what the [Plastic Free Salish Sea](#) campaign is doing.



Help reduce stormwater pollution

When each of the 4 million people around Puget Sound makes a small change, it adds up to cleaner, healthier water. Pick up after your [pets](#), fix [car leaks](#), install a [rain garden](#), and use [natural yard care](#) practices.



Eat sustainable seafood

[Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch](#) program provides guidance for seafood lovers! You can also [view a list](#) of local Seattle Area sustainable seafood partners.



Learn to be Whale Wise

Seeing marine wildlife is a thrilling experience, but our presence has an effect. Federal regulations for orcas require that boaters stay away and keep the path of the whales clear. When going whale watching, look for a [Whale Wise](#) guide.



Support funding for salmon habitat restoration

Your voice is important! Determine who your [local representatives](#) and [state representatives](#) are, and talk to them about your ideas and concerns.



Get involved in local restoration work

Organizations across the region including the [Northwest Straits Initiative](#), [Conservation Districts](#), [Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups](#), and state agencies are working every day to restore salmon habitat. They all could use the help of volunteers like you.



Crabber Outreach

On opening crabbing weekend, the Snohomish MRC worked with Washington State University Extension Beach Watchers staff and volunteers to connect with more than 1,300 fishers (men and women) through in-person and social media outreach.

Volunteers [provided information](#) and products to support sustainable fishing and crabbing practices that help reduce both marine debris and wildlife loss throughout the region. Volunteers conducted outreach on three mornings (July 4th, 6th and 10th) at the Everett 10th Street boat launch, Kayak Point boat launch and pier, and the Edmonds fishing pier. Crabber outreach continued throughout the summer on the Edmonds pier where hundreds of education packets were provided to fishers and interested members of the public.

Spotlight:

- Researchers estimate that **12,000 crab pots are lost** each year in Puget Sound.
- Lost pots catch and **kill** an estimated **129,000 crabs annually**.



▶ MyCoast Marketing Campaign

After piloting the MyCoast app in Snohomish County, the MyCoast app became available statewide in 2019! To help spread the word, the Snohomish MRC completed a marketing campaign for the tool. The team created advertisements, brochures, social media posts, and business cards for the app. In 2019, the app collected over 2,000 reports statewide.

Spotlight:

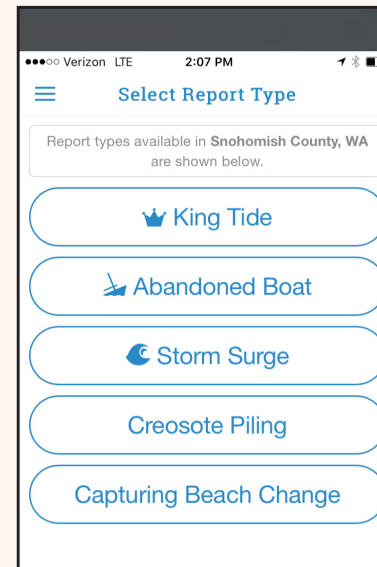
View the [Snohomish County MyCoast Website](#) for more information.

MyCoast

▶ Citizen Science with the MyCoast App

The MyCoast App is a free smartphone app and webpage that can be downloaded by anyone who wants to participate in an MRC project. The MRC created “forms” which users can fill out to participate in MRC Projects. These projects include:

- Storm Surge Monitoring Project
- Report derelict vessels
- Report creosote pilings
- Document king tides
- Capture beach change



▶ In 2019, **391 MyCoast reports** were generated in Snohomish County using the smartphone app.



Community Involvement

The MRC hosted educational tables at four community events in 2019:

- Sound Waters University 2019
- UW Bothell Earth Day
- Snohomish County Earth Day
- Earth Day at the Imagine Children's Museum

MRC In The News

In 2019, the Snohomish MRC was highlighted in several local newspapers and appeared on TV news. In total, there were 8 news stories featuring the MRC or MRC-related activities. Topics included the committee seeking new members, MRC Orca Talk event, promotion of MyCoast app, and derelict boat removals.



Thank You

The MRC receives support from the Northwest Straits Commission, Puget Sound Partnership, the United States Environmental Protection Agency, and Snohomish County Public Works' Surface Water Management Division for the Marine Resources Program.

Thank you to our MRC Members. Your work and dedication to protecting and restoring the marine environment is making a difference in Snohomish County.

2019 MRC Members:

Sarah Brown, 2019 Chair

Michael Ehlebracht 2019 Co-Vice Chair

Robert Hillmann 2019 Co-Vice Chair

Cathy Stanley

Paul Clampitt

Franchesca Perez

Traci Sanderson

Susan Tarpley

Deborah Hopkins

Laura Gurley

Craig Wollam

Tom Doerge

A special thank you to the MRC Program Manager and Lead Staff Kathleen Pozarycki, MRC Planner Elisa Dawson, Surface Water Management staff Luke Hanna, Frank Leonetti, Melody Ovard, and to the many other Snohomish County employees who have contributed time and expertise to the 2019 MRC projects.

We would also like to recognize the partnership of the Tulalip Tribes and the Stillaguamish Tribe for providing in-kind staff support and coordination for MRC Projects. It's a critical partnership for the MRC Program!

The accomplishments and current activities of the Snohomish County MRC depend on contributions from MRC Members, volunteers, Snohomish County staff members and individuals from other organizations. Their interest and participation in MRC activities is greatly appreciated.

How to reach us?

- www.snocomrc.org

How to become involved

- Attend monthly MRC meetings
- Volunteer on local projects
- Become a member of the Northwest Straits Foundation
- Sign up for [MRC email distribution list](#) and [Northwest Straits Initiative newsletter](#)

When/Where are meetings held?

- Third Wednesday of every month at 6:30 p.m.
Snohomish County Administrative Building East
on the 6th Floor



Staff Kathleen Pozarycki and Elisa Dawson