



Western Washington University
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Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference

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Building citizen science rigor, efficiency and policy applications: examples from Island County marine resources committee

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Building Citizen Science Rigor, Efficiency, and Policy Applications: Examples from Island County Marine Resources Committee

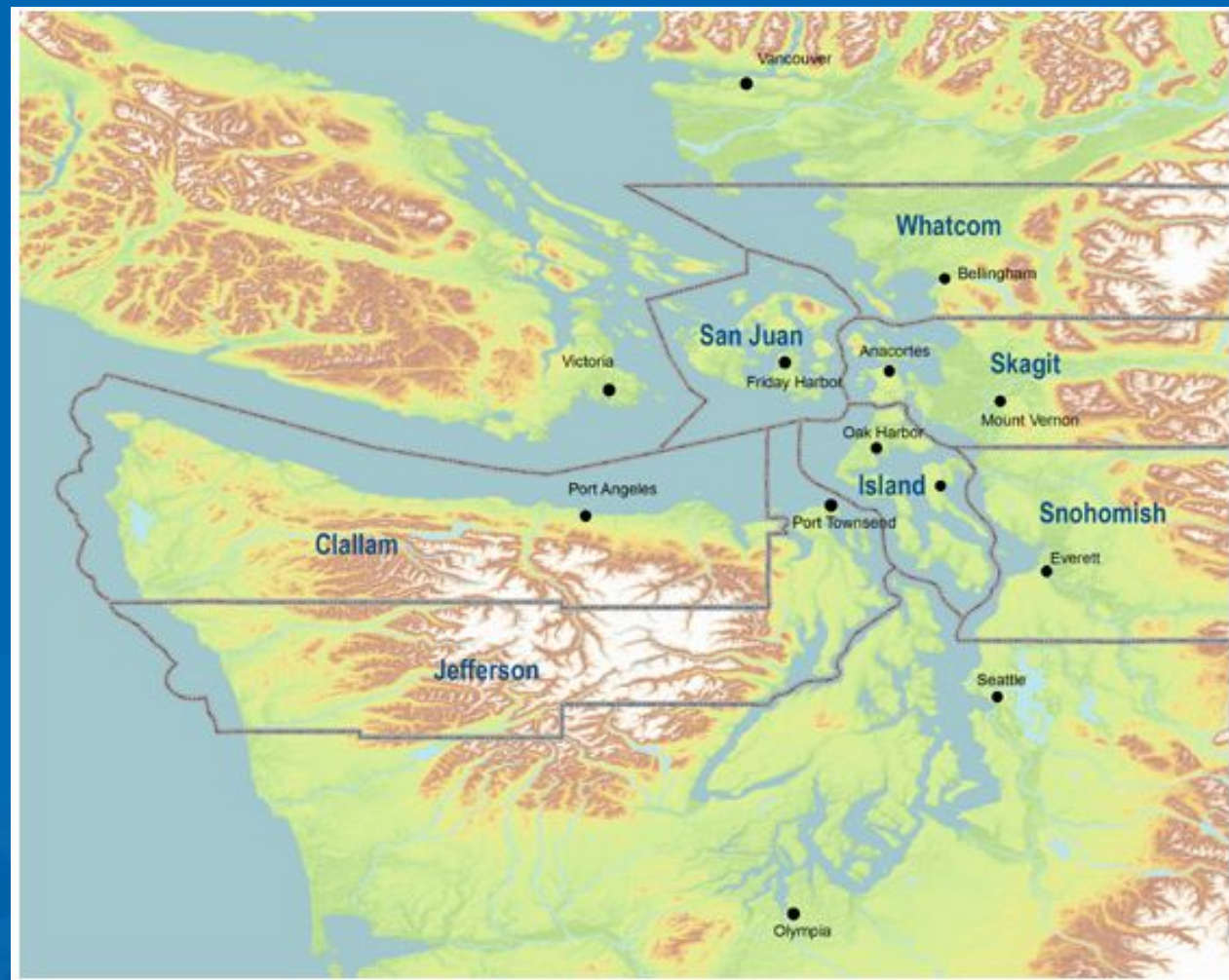
Elsa Schwartz, Island County MRC Chair

Barbara Bennett, Island County MRC Vice-Chair



Marine Resources Committees History

- 1980s-1990s National Marine Sanctuary Proposal
- Murray-Metcalf Commission
 - Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative 1998



Northwest Straits Commission

Provides funding, training, and support to MRCs



Northwest Straits Foundation

Nonprofit that leverages additional financial resources

Marine Resources Committees

Volunteers guided by sound science to identify priorities, advise local authorities, conduct projects, and build local awareness, support, and engagement.

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Local Elected
Officials



General Public

County Department
Directors & Staff



Tribes



Scientific
Community

Local MRC Dialogue with Stakeholders



County
Commissioners



General
Public



County Department
Directors & Staff



Tribes



Scientific
Community



Project Planning Cycle



Project Planning – Needs Assessment

- **Current and emerging trends**
- **Relationships between trends and marine components**
- **Issues to be researched, remedied, communicated to staff or public**
- **Best ways to communicate with decision makers**
- **Thoughts on past and future MRC work**
- **Others to interview**
- **Goals, plans for reporting and thanks**

Project Planning – Prioritize

Criteria	Tiers			
	4 (Highest)	3	2	1 (lowest)
Impact on Puget Sound protection or recovery	Has a large measureable impact	Some impact, could be better with minor adjustments (better funding/more partnerships etc./better metrics)	Has a minor impact/not easily measured	Has no impact
Fills a niche	We're the only ones doing it	A couple of other organizations are involved	A lot of other groups involved, but we play a noticeable role	Everyone is involved, we're a needle in a haystack
Competition with other organizations	No competition	Some competition, but doesn't/ won't prohibit us	Highly competitive, we're getting crowded by others	We can't/won't be able to make a meaningful contribution
Funding availability	We always get funding (every year) and will continue to get it	We usually get funding but not always, the future looks the same	Funding comes and goes and is expected to continue this way.	Funding has or is drying up
Level of MRC engagement	MRC members are directly involved. Wouldn't happen without them.	MRC members provide some organization/planning but do not "get their hands dirty"	MRC members show interest, but they're not directly involved	MRC members have no interest

**Engage
Scientific Community**

Juvenile Salmon Survey

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Skagit River Systems Cooperative

**Secure
Data Analysis**

Eelgrass

WA Department of Natural Resources

**Seek Opportunities to
Publish**

Forage Fish

WA Department of Fish and Wildlife

**Make Data Available
and Visible**

Pigeon Guillemot Survey

Washington and Whidbey Audobon Societies

Cornet Bay Restoration

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
US Fish and Wildlife Service



Consider Project Life Cycle



Key Questions

in Annual Citizen Science Project Review

- What have we learned to date?
- What are next research questions?

Outreach to Decision Makers, Staff and Public



- Develop awareness and accurate knowledge
- Hear questions, understand concerns
- Dialogue re: emerging policy opportunities
- Overall, cultivate stakeholder relationships

Resources

Island County Marine Resources Committee website

<http://www.islandcountymrc.org/>

Northwest Straits Initiative

<http://www.nwstraits.org/about-us/overview/>

Juvenile Salmon Survey Summary

http://www.islandcountymrc.org/media/17663/cornet_2009-2016_final.pdf

Eelgrass Summary

<http://www.islandcountymrc.org/media/1051/2013-eelgrass.pdf>



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