

**Jefferson County Marine Resources Committee Meeting
5:30 – 7:30 PM on May 5, 2026**

**Quilcene Community Center (294952 US-101)
Meeting Minutes**

Present:

Neil Harrington, Tribal, Vice-Chair
Gordon King, Commercial
Troy McKelvey, Recreation
Timothy Behrenfeld, District 1
Brenda Johnson, District 2, NWSC Rep
Jon Waggoner, Marine Science Alt
Sarah Fiske, District 3, NWSC Alt
Tim Cross, District 3 Alt
Odhran Waggoner, Local Youth
Betsy Carlson, Env/Conserv
Tonya Cole, Meeting Recorder

Absent:

Emily Buckner, Marine Science, Chair
Roy Clark, Recreation Alt
Heidi Eisenhour, ex officio, BoCC
Carol Haase, Port of PT
Steve King, City of PT
Bella Ferland, Local Youth Alt
Bryan DeCaterina, Env/Conserv Alt
Frank Handler, District 2 Alt

Guest speaker

Wendel Raymond – Nearshore Ecology Research Scientist,
WDFW Habitat Program

Public

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Staff

Katie Kowal – Water Resources Program Coordinator
Jefferson County MRC/WSU Extension

Topic	Update or Issue	Decisions/Follow-Up	Responsibility
CALL TO ORDER, MISSION & INTERDUCTIONS	Vice Chair Neil Harrington called the meeting to order at 5:28PM	A quorum was present.	All members – please send volunteer hours to Katie.
AMENDMENTS TO/APPROVAL OF AGENDA APPROVAL OF MINUTES	Amendments to / Approval of Agenda No BoCC Rep or Port Commissioner present; no update. Amendments to / Approval of Minutes April minutes approved with one correction: typo on bottom of page 3 — fix "JST."	Gordon moved to approve the agenda as amended. Seconded by Brenda. Motion passed. Jon W. moved to approve the minutes as amended. Seconded by Sarah. Motion passed.	
PUBLIC COMMENT	Public Comments Angela Gloré, Coordinator for the Strait Ecosystem Recovery Network: Local Forum at the upcoming Puget Sound Partnership's Leadership Council meeting. The SERN is hosting them on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June 3–4 at Red Cedar Hall, Blyn, WA • Two-hour forum on oil spill preparedness and response on the Peninsula. • Public meeting--anyone is welcome. • Site visits to follow. 		
GUEST SPEAKER: WENDEL RAYMOND Nearshore Ecology Research Scientist, WDFW Habitat Program	WENDEL RAYMOND <i>Nearshore Ecology Research Scientist, WDFW Habitat Program</i> Wendel introduced the WDFW Nearshore Science Team and gave an overview of research and monitoring tied to the Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project (PSNERP), a 16-year, \$22 million multi-agency initiative to restore and protect Puget Sound nearshore habitat. BACKGROUND Three large-scale projects received congressional approval: Skagit, Nooksack, and Duckabush. Puget Sound has lost roughly 77% of tidal wetland in its 16 largest river deltas — about 50,000 acres — and some rivers have lost certain wetland types entirely. Partners include UW, NOAA Sea Grant, Washington DNR, HCSEG, the Skokomish Indian Tribe, and the Ecostudies Institute. PLANNED DUCKABUSH RESTORATION The restoration scope includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove 100-year-old, 1,700-foot causeway 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace aging culverts and improve stormwater management • Restore historic river channels and build a new 1,600-foot estuary-spanning bridge <p>Final design was completed in January 2026, with construction potentially beginning summer 2027. Thirty-five percent of project funding is secured (\$6M in hand); \$84M in federal funding is still being sought.</p> <p>CURRENT RESEARCH & MONITORING</p> <p><i>Forage Fish Spawning Surveys</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly surveys conducted October–March since 2023 at six stations across two drift cells. Surf smelt and sand lance are present. The drift cells appear to operate independently, with short-term sediment changes observed. <p><i>European Green Crab Monitoring</i> (WDFW/Skokomish Tribe/Sea Grant)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first Duckabush detection occurred April 24, 2025, with eight more found July 8, 2025. To date, 295+ traps have been set and 17 EGC caught. Hood Canal-wide catch rates are up 13-fold since 2024, with nine new detection sites confirmed. The species appears to be expanding southward through Hood Canal. <p><i>Seal Diet Study</i> (WDFW/NOAA — Casey Clark)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twice-monthly seal abundance surveys are being conducted December 2025 through December 2026. To date, 455 scat samples have been collected and analyzed, and satellite tags have been applied to 21 seals to track movement and behavior. <p><i>Intertidal Community Monitoring</i> (WDFW/DNR/UW)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual surveys have been conducted since 2023 at Duckabush, Dosewallips, and Rendsland, building on a 25+ year Puget Sound dataset. Soft sediment communities are strongly influenced by sediment grain size and dynamics. <p><i>Fish Community Monitoring</i> (WDFW/HCSEG)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveys at Duckabush and Dosewallips have been underway since 2025, targeting juvenile salmonids and the broader fish community. Chum dominate early season and coho dominate summer; the Duckabush shows higher overall catch. <p>ROAD AHEAD</p> <p>Monitoring continues across all projects. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers may implement additional upper estuary monitoring, and HCSEG and partners are conducting vegetation and bird monitoring.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WDFW PROJECT SITE>Duckabush Estuary Restoration Project is a great information resource. • The Duckabush Research and Monitoring Workgroup meets twice annually; the next meeting is May 18th. • wendel.raymond@dfw.wa.gov • PugetSoundNearshore@dfw.wa.gov <p>Q&A / DISCUSSION</p> <p>JON asked whether the two forage fish drift cells are producing different results — specifically whether forage fish are showing up in one but not the other.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wendel explained that results aren't in yet. Field work involves processing large sediment samples through a blue bowl, then passing egg material to the WCC crew for lab identification. There's a lag in the data, but the WCC crew is better at egg identification. He noted that visually, there seemed to be fewer eggs this season compared to 2024/25. <p>GORDON observed that the Dosewallips river looks larger than the Duckabush but has less fish. He wondered if it was a catchment issue, stream quality, etc...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wendel said the two rivers are fairly similar in size — he thinks the Dosewallips is slightly bigger — but effective sampling at the Dosewallips is more confined than at the Duckabush due to how the deltas fan out differently. WDFW does in-stream counts as well, and numbers have significantly reduced over time. <p>TIM B. asked about effects the restoration will have on eelgrass.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wendel said it will be interesting to watch — likely similar patterns to bivalves. The Duckabush currently acts like two firehoses pushing sediment out, which is bad for eelgrass. Lowering water velocity may have a positive impact, though it could take a decade. DNR's submerged aquatic vegetation monitoring program will track this, and a net positive outcome is expected. Similar improvements could apply to bivalves. <p>BRENDA asked whether the department seeds those two estuaries with bivalves.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wendel said they no longer seed the Duckabush or Dosewallips but do seed Rendsland, noting there are a lot of oysters to “kneel on out there.” 		
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	<p>NEIL asked whether the channels in the Duckabush represent different habitats than those in the Dosewallips.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wendel pointed to one channel running into the highway, but when the highway is gone, it will be reconnected. But right now, this calm, dead water slough is situated right next to the main river channel, which has diverse salinity and stays colder than the other channel. <p>SARAH asked why there is such a difference between the two.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wendel explained a nearby culvert creates very little freshwater influence, resulting in muddy, warm conditions. He noted they only added that site this past season, not initially realizing there was a culvert there scheduled for replacement. He also mentioned the practical limitations of where they can drag a 200-pound net with a small dinghy across the estuary. <p>BETSY asked how long the project has been in the works.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wendel said about 3.5 years. When he started at the agency, he wasn't aware people were already discussing the restoration project and saw it as a great scientific opportunity. The European Green Crab and Seal work is a little different, but the current monitoring work is being done on funding found between the "couch cushions" and leaning heavily on partners to assist. <p>NEIL asked whether volunteers from the Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group are involved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wendel confirmed that there are people working under the care of HCSEG help with a variety of this monitoring work. They are not volunteers for the agency. A discussion followed on how people could help, and under what agency, but not be volunteers. Wendell recommended that they continue discussing it. <p>TIM C noted it will be exciting for people 50–100 years from now when water levels are deeper, to see that we had some foresight.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wendell added that sea level rise and stormwater runoff were part of the design considerations. He believes that the new road grade will be 6–8 feet higher than the current one, and the design intends to allow elk to pass underneath. <p>NEIL recalled that over 15 years ago, Conservation Futures funds were used to buy out the site of a fire station above the Duckabush that was repeatedly flooded. He noted that the causeway essentially acts like a dam.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wendel confirmed the hope is that the new design will mitigate that flood risk. He recommended visiting the water side of the delta — a 20-foot berm will be gone. A lot of change is coming, all for the better. 		
<p>ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES</p>	<p>Administrative Updates (Katie) None.</p>		
<p>GRANT PROJECT UPDATES</p>	<p>Grant Project Updates</p> <p>FORAGE FISH She sampled with Troy and Tim in Quilcene and Dabob.</p> <p>OLYMPIA OYSTERS DISCOVERY BAY Neil and Katie are working on permits for Discovery Bay, with submission expected soon.</p> <p>SURVEY PLANNING:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> July 15–16th set aside, starting around 9:00 am Neil prefers weekend surveys, but had to do weekdays due to the tides. Disco Bay may require both days. However, there's a possibility of running two concurrent surveys <p>MYSTERY BAY / KILISUT HARBOR Julieta Martinelli from WDFW will join Neil at the Nordland Store property (tideland across from the store). There are some existing Olympia Oysters and the owners may be open to doing restoration there.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A survey at Mystery Bay/Kilisut Harbor may be added on July 16th—possibly for Eelgrass as well. The goal is to get the site primed in case permits need to be written. <p>PORT LUDLOW / PICNIC POINT Plan is to collect brood stock, raise them up, and set them out. Seed from Kilisut Harbor could potentially go into Port Ludlow, but permitting is still needed. Neil visited the site about six weeks ago and found juveniles present.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The next step is coordinating with Tim C. on a test plot. Neil will discuss options with him. 		

	<p>BULL KELP MONITORING (Jon) A June kayak monitoring date has been added this year.</p> <p>UPCOMING SURVEY DATES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saturday, June 20th; Sunday held as backup Target tide: 0-1 ft Monitoring window runs mid-June through August Volunteers will be contacted soon <p>UPCOMING EVENTS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KELP MONITORING KICK-OFF Friday, May 8th, 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm JST Red Cedar Hal • ONLINE KELP MONITORING WORKGROUP MEETING Wednesday, May 13th, 10:00 am – noon <p>EELGRASS BUOYS (Troy)</p> <p>Gordon, Bryan and Troy replaced the SE-most buoy, which came loose due to a very short rope — possibly cut free by someone who was tangled in the line. The original anchor could not be located; a new one was installed. Maintenance performed on four to five buoys total. Troy thanked Taylor Shellfish for use of their boat.</p> <p>The team also visited the ferry dock area, where eelgrass was not visible from the surface. The buoy between the ferry dock and the boat haven is difficult to access, due to large nearby rocks. Gordon noted that he can try again using a shorter anchor with a smaller screw. The buoys are up in Hadlock except for one. Mystery Bay buoys have not been visited recently by NAZ team.</p> <p>Merita from WA Dept. of Health in Gig Harbor contacted Gordon re: No-Anchor and a review of the 2010 Mystery Bay Management Plan. She’s reviewing the plan to determine if updates are needed. She wants to gather every interested party, bring them to the table, and so reached out to the MRC.</p> <p>EDUCATION & OUTREACH (Betsy)</p> <p>SEARCHING FOR SEAWEED The event was a success — an article ran in the <i>Peninsula Daily News</i>, and the youngest participant was 18 months old. Katie sent a post-event survey and received 5 responses, all positive.</p> <p>BLESSING OF THE FLEET - QUILCENE Betsy, Sarah, Katie, and Odhran attended the event. About 25 people stopped at their table. She had great conversations with people. A small boat parade of canoes, kayaks, and paddleboards made for a nice community event.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NO DIGGING FOR DINNER this year • CRABBER PACKET packing Monday, May 11th at 2:00 pm Kits to help crabbers avoid losing their gear (contingent on having all the gauges) • CRABBING 101 Wednesday, June 24th, 6:00-8:00 pm Tri-Area Community Center • WOODEN BOAT FESTIVAL (WBF) Sept 11 – 13, 2026 All speakers confirmed, schedule not yet finalized Neil noted that he is unavailable on Friday <p>Betsy noted they will be getting advertising out there about the MRC. Jon mentioned hearing an MRC meeting ad on KPTZ. Katie said that Emily has been placing ads when a speaker is presenting at the meetings.</p> <p>SHORELINE LANDOWNER OUTREACH (Sarah)</p> <p>Lisa Kauffman is working on permits for Quilcene bulkhead removal. She is coming to speak at the September meeting.</p> <p>RAIN GARDEN – FUTURE PLANNING (Neil) Katie and Neil looked at all of the Rain Gardens in Port Townsend and Neil came away encouraged — the worst one isn't too bad, and several, including Franklin and Adams, are looking beautiful right now. Overall the gardens are rated between very good and excellent. Katie has written up a summary in Google Docs.</p>		
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	<p>The committee met last Monday and there is a path forward. A landscaper will help with the garden needing the most attention, and a community work party is being planned for weeding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RAIN GARDEN WORK PARTY Tentatively Saturday, May 23rd 2–3 hours; open to all • Tim B. noted that Students for Sustainability are very interested in participating. Saturday was the general consensus over an after-school option. <p>Sarah raised the question of the QUILCENE RAIN GARDEN and Katie said the advice she received was to let the gardens go back to the land. There are water access issues and it may be on private property, unlike the PT gardens--which are on public right-of-way.</p> <p>Neil shared that Master Gardener Coordinator, Bridget Gregg, said Rain Gardens serve two functions — treating stormwater and serving as a public outreach tool. They demonstrate stormwater management options for both public spaces and private landowners. The ones in the city and in front of the Quilcene school work well for outreach.</p> <p>City of Port Townsend envisions RG’s as the landowner’s responsibility for the right-of-way, but they would lend support. The MRC would like to gradually withdraw from these long-term maintenance commitments over time.</p> <p>Work parties planned for May & October. October is when planting will occur.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Katie will have the notes from the meeting ideally by the end of the week. 		
PORT of PT UPDATES	Port of PT Updates (Carol Hasse) Moved to next month due to time constraints		
BoCC UPDATE	BoCC Updates (Heidi) Moved to next month due to time constraints		
NWSC HIGHLIGHT NOTES	<p>NWSC Highlight Notes (Brenda)</p> <p>Two business meetings have occurred since her last update, there is a lot of ground to cover.</p> <p>APRIL 2–3 OFFSITE MEETING/RETREAT — DERELICT VESSEL FUNDS The committee reviewed the proposed projects list and approved 6 projects totaling \$20K, leaving \$61K designated for derelict vessel removal/salvage. NWSC is still working out how to allocate that remaining amount. There was a solicitation for JCMRC members to be involved in that committee. Katie sent it out to the members.</p> <p>Brenda raised concern that \$61K won't go far if a single vessel removal costs \$20–30K. She envisions a prioritization on what boats would be removed...concentrated in Snohomish and Skagit county. Neil received an email from Dana —and there are several vessels.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brenda said this will fall to a committee again and asked for a show of hands for committee interest: Troy, Sarah, and Brenda volunteered. Sarah receives Dana’s emails and will forward to others in the committee. • Neil noted this may function as a more regional group rather than a reconstituted subcommittee. <p>This year, the Jefferson MRC returned all funds to NWSC.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Katie noted that each MRC gets one vote on how extra funds are spent. • Neil suggested adding this to next month’s agenda, MRC will discuss further at June 2 MRC meeting. <p>BIG IDEAS ASK Each MRC is being asked to propose what they could do with \$500,000/year — three times their normal allocation. This stems from the PS Reauthorization Bill; strong turnout at <i>Day On The Hill</i> generated significant interest in MRC work. Total potential NWSC funding: \$10 million, divided among seven MRCs, NWSC and staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brenda will write up the proposal; Katie will distribute • Informal target: May 29th meeting — Brenda but that’s too soon; this needs more time • Gordon noted this level of funding would mean hiring staff; Neil called it a good problem to have. • Brief discussion of ideas. Neil suggested they reserve time for more discussion at the June meeting. 	<p>ACTION: NWSC fund allocation is added to the June 2, 2026 JCMRC meeting agenda.</p> <p>ACTION: Neil will reserve 20 minutes at MRC June 2, 2026 meeting for discussion on the Big Ideas Ask</p>	
NWSC HIGHLIGHT NOTES			

	<p>EUROPEAN GREEN CRAB NWSC under the guidance of Ellie Simpson has run NWSC's European Green Crab trapping program for 3 years. NWSC staff no longer wants to continue doing it and is asking MRCs to consider taking it over. Brenda said it was explained to her as the NWSC stepped in because there was a gap of people available to do the trapping where it was originally needed. NWSC's proposal would have MRC volunteers trained to conduct molt searches, separate from the Sea Grant program.</p> <p>Concerns raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEIL: actual trapping is physically demanding — thick mud, significant gear —he's not comfortable with a volunteer trapping program • BRENDA: NWSC may not fully appreciate the liability issues and should come talk with the MRC directly • BETSY: the priority should be public recognition of European Green Crab and identification of key beach sites — a parallel program isn't needed • NEIL noted a regional coordination group has already done much of this work; the MRC shouldn't duplicate existing efforts. But we should think about how we can best support these efforts (i.e...molt search) • GORDON said that European Green Crab is already well covered in this community; happy to support but not take on additional programming • BRENDA will reach out to Ally for clarification on what NWSC is actually asking. • Proposed timeframe for any transition: 2027 <p>NEW SCIENCE ADVISOR Nicole Narr has been named as the new Science Advisor and Team Lead at WA Sea Grant. She reviewed recent leadership changes and new appointments within the NWSC's rotating leadership roles.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • David Trimbach presented <i>Understanding the Human Dimensions of Kelp</i>, including a participatory mapping project covering all 23 kelp species. Asian communities were included to see where they use kelp. • Cecilia Gobin gave input from the NW Indian Fisheries Commission. • Mindy Roberts, new Exec. Director of PS Partnerships was scheduled to give a presentation, but the meeting went overtime, so she didn't have a chance to speak. <p>STRATEGIC PLANNING UPDATE At the annual meeting in LaConner six months ago, breakout sessions addressed MRCs thriving and reaching their potential. It was discussed in detail at the April retreat. The work is ongoing; materials are not yet ready for review. Brenda is waiting for a summary.</p>		
<p>ANNUAL BoCC MEETING MRC ANNOUNCEMENTS & ROUNDTABLE</p>	<p>ANNUAL BoCC MEETING Neil Neil and Emily attended. The commissioners showed genuine interest in MRC work and asked insightful questions. Neil noted that the MRC is fortunate to have such positive engagement from the commissioners. Neil will be chairing the next meeting, while Emily is on maternity leave</p> <p>MRC ANNOUNCEMENTS & MEMBER ROUNDTABLE</p> <p>MEMBER UPDATE Jeff Taylor has resigned from Storm Surge; Jon Waggoner has taken over. Jeff is willing to maintain the dataset and Jon can manage it through the fall so it can remain on Sound IQ. A knowledge transfer between Jon and Jeff still needs to take place.</p> <p>Katie raised two broader questions for the group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What criteria define an MRC project? • Who will be in the field sampling? <p>Jon confirmed there are many motivated volunteers willing to monitor tides independently — one of his goals this summer is to connect them all. Katie asked the question of whether the MRC or Local 20/20 serves as the designated point of contact.</p> <p>Brenda flagged that NWSC has rules about what MRC funding can be spent on, particularly around documentation requirements in Request for Proposals (RFPs).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The MRC is an advisory board to the Jefferson County BoCC, but NWSC funding comes with conditions • Gordon noted the MRC is not obligated to follow NWSC direction unless it wishes to receive their funding 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neil noted that from his perspective the MRC works for the NWSC since they pay for it Gordon noted he assumes Storm Surge is paid for by the NWSC Katie and Jon noted Storm Surge does not currently have/need funding Need to develop criteria defining what "MRC-led" means in the funding policy — Brenda noted there are many gray areas Agreed to discuss further at the June meeting <p>MRC Swag Katie asked if members wanted to purchase MRC hats/swag. No grant money available — members would need to pay out of pocket.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revisit next meeting. 		
FUTURE SPEAKER IDEAS	<p>Future Speaker Ideas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tim B. attended a Marine Carbon Dioxide Removal talk in Port Angeles — could be a good future presenter; work focuses on mitigating CO2 in Puget Sound and the Salish Sea Neil met the Lighthouse Keeper at the Connectivity Summit — potentially an interesting speaker topic 		
PUBLIC COMMENT	<p>Public Comment</p> <p>A member of the public thanked the MRC for their hard work and found the meeting very educational. She suggested it would be helpful to have acronyms spelled out — worth considering for future meetings and materials.</p> <p>She also attended the BLESSING OF THE FLEET in Quilcene and found it an excellent event — many local organization booths, lots to take home, including a free book on the history of Quilcene. She thinks the event has real potential and noted she came to the MRC meeting because of the flyers there.</p> <p>She asked about the locations of the rain gardens. Neil directed her to the story map: Projects > Rain Gardens > Story Map https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/036e3810dcec4f35ba23dfb11227f672</p>		
EDUCATION/ OUTREACH EVENTS	<p>Crabbing 101 Wednesday, June 24th, 6:00–8:00 pm Tri-Area Community Center</p> <p>Kayak Kelp Kickoff Meeting <i>How to use GPS, etc...</i> Jon W. & Jeff Whitty Friday, May 8th 1:00 pm -4:00 pm Red Cedar Hall at Jamestown</p> <p>Molt Search Training Thursday, May 21st 5:00 pm – 7:30 pm Marine Science Center</p>		
ANNOUNCEMENTS	<p>Announcements None.</p>		
ADJOURNMENT	Meeting was adjourned at 7:30pm	Neil adjourned the meeting.	