

Clallam County Marine Resources Committee 2016 Annual Report



Prepared by
Clallam County Marine Resources Committee



About the Clallam MRC

The Clallam County Marine Resources Committee (Clallam MRC) was established by a resolution of Clallam County as a result of the 1998 Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative, which combines data-driven science with grassroots involvement by citizens in an effort to promote local solutions that protect and restore marine resources in Clallam County.



We work to discover collaborative ways to improve shellfish harvest areas, protect marine habitat, support salmon and forage fish recovery and explore resource management alternatives to reduce impacts on marine resources. We provide input to Clallam Board of Commissioners, when appropriate, to ensure the protection and restoration of marine resources. We also manage and support projects such as marine debris removal, oiled wildlife training, Olympia oyster restoration, and community education. Each year, as part of the educational outreach, we sponsor student interns to work on Clallam MRC projects to foster their interest in natural resource careers.

As shown in the benchmark table below, our work includes a combination of activities that promote marine conservation education and outreach to the general public, projects to increase the understanding of the marine environment, projects that help restore natural historical shellfish populations, and projects that enable us to prepare for and respond to climate change and potential environmental accidents such as oil spills.

The Clallam MRC receives funding from US EPA through the Puget Sound Partnership and Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC). The table below shows how the 2015-2016 MRC tasks supported the NWSC Benchmarks.

Clallam MRC Grant Tasks	NWSC Benchmarks				
	Marine Habitats	Marine Life	Marine Water Quality	Science	Education and Outreach
Operations					
Educational Outreach					❖
Marine Debris	❖	❖			❖
Oil Spill Response	❖	❖	❖		❖
GRP Update	❖	❖			❖
Olympia Oyster Restoration	❖	❖	❖	❖	❖
Kelp Monitoring	❖	❖		❖	❖
Pigeon Guillemot Survey	❖	❖		❖	❖

Membership

The Clallam MRC is a balanced team of members comprised of local citizens representing commercial and sport fishers, conservation and environmental interests as well as tribes, cities, academia and other local governmental agencies.

Member	Interest/Representation
Current Members: September 2016	
Ed Bowlby, Chair	Academic Community
Jeff Ward, Vice-Chair	Sequim City Council
Alan Clark, NWSC Rep (May 2016 - current)	At-Large
Andrew Shogren	Commissioner District I
Lyn Muench	Commissioner District II
Mike Doherty	Commissioner District III
Jesse Waknitz	Port of Port Angeles
Brad Collins	City of Port Angeles Council
Bob Campbell	Marine Related Recreation & Tourism
Arnold Schouten	Development Community
Kathy Cooper	Marine Trades
Bob Vreeland	Conservation & Environmental Interests
Ralph Riccio	Jamestown S'Klallam Tribal
Doug Morrill	Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe
Greig Arnold	Makah Tribe
Ex-Officio Members	
Mary Ellen Winborn	Director, Clallam County Dept. Community Development
Kevin LoPiccolo	Principal Planner, Clallam County
Chris Byrnes	WA Department of Fish & Wildlife
Cathy Lear	CMRC Coordinator
Helle Andersen	CMRC Project Coordinator
Former Members: Served in 2015-16	
Randy Johnson	Jamestown S'Klallam Tribal Council

Operations

Goal: ✧ To carry out administrative functions in support of the mission, including work plan preparation, developing and preparing grant proposals, programmatic staff support, project monitoring and performance tracking, education programs and grant writing, travel, planning, and participating in training opportunities.

Clallam MRC Meetings and Communication – The Clallam MRC met monthly to discuss project items and listen to educational presentations of invited guests. Clallam MRC staff prepared and distributed meeting agendas and minutes.

Grant Administration – Clallam MRC staff wrote regular progress reports, tracked and administered the budget, and ensured projects were supported and reaching their stated goals.

Website – The Clallam MRC maintained its website (<http://www.clallamcountymrc.org/>) containing information on past and upcoming meetings, and current and completed projects. The website was regularly updated with meeting agendas and approved minutes, as well as current news.

Annual Workplan – The Clallam MRC developed a work plan to guide the work and priorities of the Clallam MRC for the 2015-2016 grant year.

Training – Clallam MRC members and staff were encouraged to participate in trainings relevant to the Clallam MRC's goals and projects. Seven MRC and staff members attended the annual MRC conference. As in other years several members renewed their HAZWOPER and oiled wildlife training. Four members and staff attended a forage fish survey training. Jeff Ward, as a representative for Clallam MRC, went to the Salish Sea conference in Vancouver, B.C. Bob Vreeland, Clallam MRC member, participated in two all-day crabber committee workshops led by Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF). Ed Bowlby and Jeff Ward, Clallam MRC Chair and Vice-Chair, participated in a Pigeon Guillemot survey training. Alan Clark participated in two kelp monitoring meetings. Helle Andersen, Clallam MRC Project Coordinator, attended a 2-day workshop on how to share scientific data with the public.

Representation at NWSC Meetings – Jeff Ward served as the Clallam MRC representative to the NWSC through May 2016. In May Alan Clark was appointed the new representative and Bob Campbell the alternate. The Representative or Alternate attended the monthly meetings with the NWSC.

Local Integrating Organization – The ERN/Strait LIO provided four workshops on development of Near Term Actions (NTAs) focusing on three strategic initiatives, shellfish, habitat and stormwater, and the cross-cutting strategic initiative. Lyn Muench, Clallam MRC member, and staff attended three of these workshops. As a member of the steering group Cathy Lear, Clallam MRC Coordinator, attended the quarterly meetings. Jeff Ward and Helle Andersen participated in several of the technical task force meetings working on the NTA process. In addition, Clallam MRC members and staff participated in the ERN/LIO quarterly meetings.

Education and Outreach

Goal: ✧ Successful engagement of the public, students, and citizen scientists in emerging water quality issues including ocean acidification, marine debris, and other water quality concerns within Clallam County that have the potential to adversely affect marine life.

Speaker Events

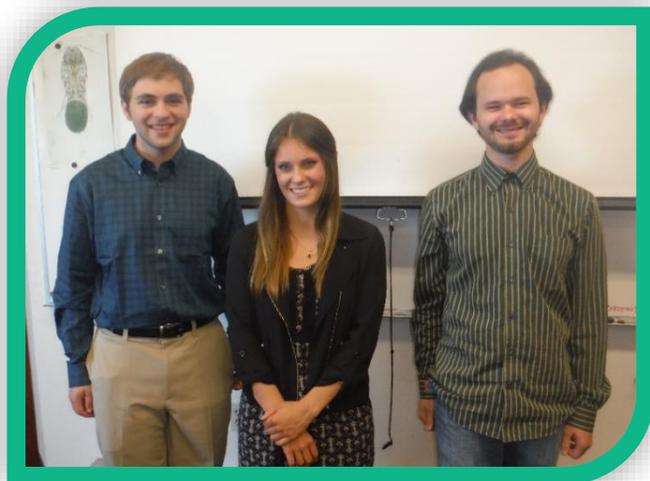
Clallam MRC organized a 3-hour workshop with the title "Changing Risks in the Strait of Juan de Fuca" with speakers from Department of Ecology, US Coast Guard and Friends of the San Juans. The presentations were followed by a round table discussion on "What happens if an oil spill is reported; on the ground response along the Strait of Juan de Fuca."

The Clallam MRC and Olympic Climate Action partnered to organize a speaker event called "Our Marine Resources Facing Climate Change." Forum speakers examined the ecological impacts of ocean acidification, the impacts of ocean acidification on local shellfish, water availability on the North Olympic Peninsula, and how individuals can be involved to help make a difference.

Educational Presentations

2015-2016 monthly public meeting presentations included:

- Beach Naturalists and Watershed Stewards programs in Jefferson County.
- The current beach cleaning efforts organized by Washington CoastSavers.
- A micro marine debris study conducted in Puget Sound between 2008 and 2010.
- Olympia oyster restoration in Jefferson County.
- The current status of the oil spill response trailers at John Wayne Marina



Intern Program

Since 2010 Clallam MRC has provided paid internships to high school and college students to work with scientists and other professionals on current environmental projects. In 2016 the Clallam MRC members decided to increase the number of paid hours for the summer internship to provide the students more time to work on the individual projects. Three interns completed the internship working on the following projects: beach use surveys along the west bank of Elwha River, updates to the Geographic Response Plan, and kelp bed surveys in Freshwater Bay. The interns presented their work at a public meeting.

Dungeness River Festival

At the 2016 festival the Clallam MRC's booth focused on the importance of good habitat and clean water for healthy shellfish populations. Live geoducks, Olympia and Pacific oysters provided a way to talk about water quality and other essentials of marine habitat. Many of the visitors also learned about the biology of geoducks.

Clallam MRC members staffed the booth during the 2-day event and reached many of the approximately 2,500 festival participants, of which 1,000 were 3-5 grade school students. Our booth was featured in Dungeness River Festival articles in Sequim Gazette and in Peninsula Daily News. <http://www.sequimgazette.com/entertainment/394246711.html>
<http://www.peninsuladailynews.com/life/dungeness-river-fest-returns-for-17th-year/>



What's Next?

Clallam MRC will continue to conduct educational outreach through the intern program, speaker series, workshops, and participation in the Dungeness River Festival.

Marine Debris

Goal: ✧ Respond to the continued issue of marine debris through an expanded network of partners and volunteers.



In 2016 Clallam MRC participated in three marine debris cleanup events.

On Earth Day Clallam MRC in partnership with CoastSavers organized the cleanup efforts along the Strait of Juan de Fuca. The Earth Day cleanup effort was a success. Marine debris was removed from between 10 and 15 beaches by a total of 172 volunteers. The total amount removed is not known, but 500 lbs. were removed from the beaches near Joyce.

In April 2016, the City of Port Angeles' ban of personal fireworks within the city limits went into effect. The ban made people use their fireworks at other locations – one of which was the west side of the Elwha Estuary. After July 4th Clallam MRC members and staff along with two summer interns removed about 26 lbs. of firework debris from the beach.

The International Coastal Cleanup effort in the fall was hampered by rainy weather. Eight beaches were visited by a total of 80 volunteers. A total of about 800 lbs. were removed with the majority of the debris removed from Peabody Creek (396 lbs.).

Accomplishments

- ✧ More than 150 local citizens and students participated in marine debris removal along the Strait of Juan de Fuca.
- ✧ More than 1,300 lbs. of marine debris was removed.

What's Next?

Clallam MRC will continue to partner with Washington CoastSavers and other organizations to organize and conduct marine debris removal events.

Oil Spill Response

Goals: ✧ Partner with federal, state and non-profit organizations to offer annual oil spill response trainings to local citizens.

Clallam MRC partnered with federal, state and non-profit organizations to offer an 8-hour Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response (HAZWOPER) training which was held in Port Angeles. Annual HAZWOPER certification is a requirement for participation in an oil spill response. The participants learned about safety & health, use of personal protective equipment, site characterization and the organization of an oiled wildlife response including the set-up of the rehabilitation center.

Clallam MRC and Island Oil Spill Association partnered to host two oiled wildlife trainings. The first training focused on basic intake and stabilization. The participants learned basic bird anatomy and how to take care of oiled birds while working with live ducks.

The second training focused on search and capture. The participants learned about search and collection procedures and how to perform an initial bird examination. During a field trip to Ediz Hook the participants practiced search and capture techniques.



Accomplishments

- ✧ 53 volunteers received the HAZWOPER certification in 2016.
- ✧ 44 volunteers participated in the oiled wildlife trainings in 2016.
- ✧ Since 2010 more than 450 volunteers have received HAZWOPER training and more than 290 volunteers have received oiled wildlife training.

What's Next?

Clallam MRC will continue to collaborate with its partners to offer annual HAZWOPER and oiled wildlife trainings.

Geographic Response Plan

Goals: ✧ Identify local data sources on marine resources that are ecologically, commercially, or recreationally important to update the existing GRP for the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Identify key data gaps and suggest monitoring strategies to address them.

Accomplishments

✧ Potential new data sources identified:



In 2016 Clallam MRC identified georeferenced information that could be used to update the publically available version of the Strait GRP. These data were collected by State resource agencies, tribal entities, and independent research or monitoring groups. The data gap assessment suggests that, in general, locations west of Dungeness Spit have the least amount of relevant environmental information to support oil response planning.

Although locations of most coastal resources that are vulnerable to oil spills are already known, some locations need to be updated or supplemented with this new information.

The new information is invaluable in establishing a current inventory to be used in a post-spill resource damage assessment, and enabling researchers to better understand the spatial and temporal trends for important aquatic resources along the Strait, and in identifying areas where data gaps exist that could be filled through citizen-science projects.

The newly identified information will be stored in [SoundIQ](#). The information may also be helpful to local, State, and Federal resource agencies tasked with assessing environmental impacts. Clallam MRC consider the collection and archival of environmental data along the Strait to be a "work in progress" that will benefit the citizens of Clallam County in many ways.

What's Next?

Clallam MRC will continue to identify information that can support oil spill response planning and environmental baseline assessment for the Strait of Juan de Fuca through stakeholder discussions. Clallam MRC will develop field sampling and analysis plans for each proposed survey and train interns and local citizens to collect the field data.

Olympia Oyster Restoration

Goal: ✧ Restore 2 acres of sustainable Olympia oyster habitat in Sequim Bay.



In 2012 Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe partnered with Clallam MRC and Puget Sound Restoration Fund to restore Olympia oysters on one acre of their tidelands in Blyn on Sequim Bay. Between 2012 and 2014 more than 755,000 Olympia oyster seed were planted on the tidelands. In 2014 half an acre of tidelands were added to the restoration effort making the total restoration site 1.5 acres.

In 2016 the Olympia oyster bed had reached a size of approximately 0.74 acres with a density of 19 oysters/m². The estimated population size for the 1.5 acres restoration site was 89,510 Olympia oysters.

Accomplishments

- ✧ In 2016 the area of the Olympia oyster bed in Blyn increased by 10% from 2015.
- ✧ In 2016 the population of Olympia oysters in the bed had increased with more than 15% from 2015.
- ✧ A new restoration site was identified at Pitship Point in Sequim Bay.
- ✧ A landowner agreement was reached with Port of Port Angeles.
- ✧ Olympia oysters were spread on two test plots at Pitship Point.
- ✧ 50 bags of seeded cultch was purchased from Puget Sound Restoration Fund.

The successful restoration effort on Jamestown’s tidelands prompted Clallam MRC to search for other potential restoration sites in Sequim Bay. Approximately 0.5 acre of suitable habitat was identified in the eastern part of the small cove at Pitship Point next to John Wayne Marina. A landowner agreement was reached with Port of Port Angeles and the restoration permit process was completed. Olympia oysters were spread on two small test plots to track survival and growth through the rest of the year and early 2017.

What's Next?

Clallam MRC will continue to monitor the Olympia oyster population in Blyn and in the two test plots at Pitship Point. The 50 purchased seeded cultch bags will be overwintered on Jamestown’s tidelands and Clallam MRC will pursue funding for an additional 50 bags ordered from Puget Sound Restoration Fund.

Kelp Monitoring

Goal: ✧ Monitor the size and density of kelp canopies during low-tide events between July and September and develop a georeferenced database of kelp abundance and distribution that can be incorporated into Sound IQ.



In 2016 Clallam MRC initiated a kelp monitoring project. The expected outcomes of the effort are to:

- ✧ Identify long-term kelp monitoring stations along the east-central portion of the Strait of Juan de Fuca.
- ✧ Use established methods to produce georeferenced density data to evaluate longer-term trends to support environmental decision-making.

In the summer of 2016 four surveys were conducted in Freshwater Bay delineating a small bed in the western part of the bay and a much larger bed in the central part of the bay.

Accomplishments

- ✧ Conducted one survey of a small kelp bed in Freshwater Bay.
- ✧ Conducted three surveys of a large bed in Freshwater Bay.
- ✧ Identified one potential future monitoring site in Clallam Bay.

A land-based survey of potential kelp monitoring sites west of Freshwater Bay identified a small kelp bed at the Clallam Bay “West” Beach Access Park. All other sites were difficult to access or the kelp beds were deemed much too large to survey safely.

The survey data was submitted to NWSC to be incorporated into their database.

What's Next?

The Clallam MRC will continue monitoring the kelp beds in Freshwater Bay and may expand the effort in summer 2017 to include the site in Clallam Bay.

Pigeon Guillemot

Goal: ✧ Monitor pigeon guillemots nesting success and foraging behavior in Clallam County.

The Pigeon Guillemot is considered an indicator species of nearshore health, since this bird feeds heavily on forage fish and other small marine creatures it catches by diving beneath the surface.

In June 2016 Clallam MRC initiated Pigeon Guillemot breeding surveys at two locations near Sequim with collaboration of Island MRC and Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society. Pigeon Guillemots lay eggs and by end of June, the birds are busy providing fish for the juveniles in the burrows. Five separate colonies at the two locations were surveyed by 14 volunteers once a week for one hour between June and September.



Accomplishments

- ✧ Partnered with Island MRC and Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society.
- ✧ Organized a team of 14 volunteers.
- ✧ Surveyed five pigeon guillemot colonies throughout the summer months.

What's Next?

In 2017 Clallam MRC will continue monitoring the five colonies near Sequim and expand the breeding survey to at least three additional sites in Clallam County.

On the Horizon

In addition to the continuation and development of existing projects as highlighted throughout this report, the Clallam MRC is looking forward to focusing on the following new projects in 2016-17.

Forage Fish

In late spring 2016 Clallam MRC joined the NWSC's forage fish monitoring efforts. Three Clallam MRC members and the project coordinator participated in a day long training provided by Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.



In October, under the new 2016-17 grant funding, Clallam MRC began conducting monthly surveys at two sites - Pitship Point adjacent to John Wayne Marina and at a public beach near Old Town east of Dungeness River.

The monthly forage fish samples are sent to Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife for analysis. The department has funding to perform the analysis until summer 2017 at which point Clallam MRC may take over the laboratory effort.



Recreational Crabber Outreach

Clallam MRC has been involved in derelict fishing gear removal for more than a decade. The very successful derelict fishing gear removal project overseen by the NWSF and conducted at a regional scale originated as a Clallam MRC project.

In 2016 the NWSF supported by a large advisory committee developed a prevention plan for lost crab pots in Puget Sound. In support of this effort Clallam MRC will refocus on educational outreach to recreational crabbers by distributing information and escape cord for pots at local festivals, sporting goods stores, and local boat ramps.



Partners

Through the years Clallam MRC has collaborated with numerous partners. The logos below list the organizations and agencies Clallam MRC partnered with in 2016.

