



## Workplan 2003

Submitted for Review and Adoption 5/7/03

### 1. What are the applicable Benchmarks?

Summary of Benchmarks established for the Northwest Straits Commission and county Marine Resources Committees (from NWSC website):

- **Local Participation:** Obtain broad county participation in marine resources committees.
- **Marine Protected Areas:** Achieve a science-based, regional system of marine protected areas. (MPA's may include ANY level of protection)
- **Habitat:** Demonstrate a net gain in highly ecologically productive nearshore, intertidal and estuarine habitat in the Northwest Straits, with no significant loss of existing, high-value habitat. Improve state, tribal and local tools to map, assess and protect nearshore habitat. Prevent harm from upland activities.
- **Shellfish:** Show a net reduction in shellfish harvest areas closed due to contamination.
- **Bottomfish:** Exhibit measurable increases in factors supporting recovery of Bottomfish (such as rockfish) - including numbers of fish of broodstock size and age, average fish size and abundance of prey species - as well as sufficient amounts and quality of protected habitat.
- **Marine Indicator Species:** Demonstrate increases in other key marine indicator species (including those identified in the 1997 West report on Puget Sound marine resources).
- **Scientific Data:** Initiate coordination of scientific data (for example, through the Puget Sound Ambient Monitoring Program), including a scientific baseline, common protocols, unified GIS, and sharing of ecosystem assessments and research.
- **Outreach and Education:** Coordinate with the Puget Sound Water Quality Action Team and other entities on an effective outreach and

education effort with measurements of the numbers of people contacted as well as changes in behavior.

**2. How does the Island County MRC track benchmark progress?**

Every MRC member is assigned to track one or more benchmarks. The benchmarks—in a nutshell--and the MRC "parent(s)" adopting them are:

1. County participation—Don Meehan/Sharon Hart
2. Regional MPAs—Roger Sherman/Phyllis Kind
3. Net Gain Habitat—Jeff Tate & Marty Behr
4. Shellfish—Hi Bronson
5. Bottomfish Recovery—Dick Toft/Mike Gallion
6. Increase in indicator species—Tom Campbell & Matt Klope
7. Data sharing/protocol—Tom Roehl
8. Outreach/education—Don Meehan and El Sayed-Sayed

**3. How do MRC grant-funded projects for 2003 address the Benchmarks?**

<b>Project/Resource</b>	<b>Benchmarks covered</b>
Education of MRC members - ongoing	1
Forage Fish Assessments – done ‘03	2-8
Eelgrass Assessments – done ‘03	2-8
Armoring Survey – done ‘03	All but 2 and 5
Feeder Bluffs, Coastal Geology – begun ‘03	2-8
Shore Stewards – begun ‘03	2-8
Derelict Gear Recovery – continues ‘03	2-8
<b>New Priorities</b>	<b>B'mark</b>
Spartina removal – begun ‘03	Habitat
Shade replanting – Cama – ‘03	Habitat
Crab breeding Habitat	Habitat
Dock remnant clean-up Cama – ‘03	Habitat
GIS maps of MRC data – begun ‘03	Data sharing
Data interpretation for planning – ‘03	MPAs

**2003 Workplan Analysis by Benchmarks**

**Benchmark # 1 - Local Participation/Administration**

Continue to have well organized and widely publicized meetings twice a month – with one per month in summer -- with significant educational content, presenting a new topic/speaker at each second monthly meeting. Seek to have 75% or higher meeting attendance participation from MRC membership. Maintain the MRC at its full complement, and suggest appropriate new committee appointments by working with the Board of Island County Commissioners (BOCC). Have regular meetings with the County Commissioners to insure their understanding of the work plan, projects, and issues facing the MRC. Schedule an annual meeting of the MRC and BOCC if possible.

Provide regular notices to news media of meetings (to include agendas) and educational programs. Keep the ICMRC Website, located at [www.islandcountymrc.org](http://www.islandcountymrc.org), up-to-date. Develop, maintain and work on an annual work plan. Put work plan on the MRC website. Education: Design an annual educational program to fit with the work plan and to look to the future work of the MRC. Include full membership in the design of the annual program.

Work with the MRC administrative assistant Dan Pedersen and Executive Director Gary Wood to develop a plan for a public relations effort to push out media content the MRC feels the public should have about the MRC or the issues it is facing. MRC member education - ((Refer to Report Section on Future Priorities and Educational Programs below) Project: MRC membership Training year round.

#### **Benchmark # 2 - Marine Protected Areas 2003 Goals**

- Establish criteria for any additional MPA's in Island County.
- Work with the diving community to explore more potential MPA's
- Investigate potential MPA sites on Camano Island.
- Work with other MRC's to develop a network of MPA's in Puget Sound.
- Consider obtaining a grant to hire professionals to design a network of MPA's for the entire Puget Sound.

The first meeting of the Island County Marine Resource Committee was held on September 21, 1999. The Committee was challenged to protect the local marine environment and contribute to the protection of the marine environment of the northwest straits (whatever that is). Since that first meeting, it has become increasingly obvious that Marine Protected Areas, or Marine Reserves were the tools needed.

MRC meetings for the first three years have included committee education about the complexities of MPAs and marine reserves. We have had workshops, attended MPA conferences and had hands-on experience with DFW's Island County designations. The location and design of any type of marine reserve is very complex. Numerous designations may be used, such as "no take," "volunteer no take," "no spear fishing," "no shellfish," "recreational," "commercial only," "sport fishing only," "educational" and etc. The planning process must

include the public along with numerous governmental agencies. The option of zoning levels for nearshore waters will also be explored.

- 1 WDFW established two Island County MPAs/ MRC role significant?
- 2 Help DNR establish aquatic reserves.
- 3 Investigate potential new sites for MPAs.
- 4 Continue the education of the Island County MRC.
- 5 Educate the public about MPAs and reserves. (See benchmark #8)
- 6 Community involvement in the selection of MPAs
- 7 Develop MPA criteria for Island County.

### **Benchmark # 3 - Net Gain in Nearshore Habitat**

In 2003, the MRC will complete its inventory and mapping for eelgrass, contracted to Jim Norris, PhD. Begin the inventory and mapping of feeder bluffs, forage fish and shoreline hardening. Start overlaying eelgrass, feeder bluff, forage fish and shoreline hardening data, possibly incorporate Beach Watcher info that shows beach profiles and conditions. This will be a first step in determining correlations in the presence of specific geologic conditions and marine conditions with upland development and shoreline modification.

Shore Stewards will generate an educational resource pamphlet for shoreline property owners. The purpose of the pamphlet would be to provide existing and potential shoreline property owners with information about how to manage their unique waterfront properties. The focus of the pamphlet will be to inform owners of techniques that can be employed which will protect their land and investments in a manner that will ensure nearshore and shoreline habitat are protected. Specifically, the pamphlet should include types of fertilizers that should be used, where they can be purchased and how they should be applied; types of vegetation that can be planted that will help reduce erosion and where they can purchase such plants; a list of best management practices related to drainage, construction and other items; a list of contact names and numbers of DFW, DOE and county staff, as well as contact names and numbers of groups that promote shoreline education and preservation like Beach Watchers, Audubon and TNC. The pamphlet should be provided to realtors and lending institutions with a targeted outreach program that informs them of how these measures will better protect the lands in which they are trying to sell and/or finance, which will lead to a more sound investment.

#### **Education:**

Publish the benefits that would accrue from the restoration of the eelgrass beds by making a comparison between the "before" and "after" scenarios. Publish the results of the soon-to-be launched Derelict gear project. Army Corps of

Engineers - Among other reasons, they have significant funding for restoration projects on the shoreline. Possibly a presentation by the Whidbey Island Dive Center who could show us photographs of the different species we're concerned about and spending money learning about.

**Projects:**

Nearshore Project Phase I - mapping – forage fish, eelgrass

Nearshore Project Phase II – mapping – forage fish, eelgrass, feeder bluff study, mapping, shoreline stewards certification program – new

**Benchmark #4 - Shellfish**

The benchmark calls for a net reduction in closure of shellfish areas. At some point we'll need to query the Health District to get this kind of data.

Determine the source(s) of contamination and the culprit(s).

Determine if the contamination is chronic or transient.

Explore means to mitigate such contamination.

Determine if there is a threat to the shellfish populations.

**Education:**

Educate the public to what causes the decline in shellfish harvest

Inform the public about sources of contamination and how to avoid.

**Project:**

None scheduled for 2003. Snohomish MRC is evaluating crab assessment criteria, and it may be feasible to join in their work.

**Benchmark # 5 -Bottomfish Recovery**

Put on another program for the members of Puget Sound Anglers (PSA) of North Whidbey explaining the mission and Goals of the MRC and the work it has done to date. Solicit their input as knowledgeable experts on the location of Bottom fish populations in the waters surrounding Whidbey and Camano islands. Provide a large-scale map of the waters around Whidbey and Camano Islands and request that the location of known bottom fish populations be marked along with the type of fish predominating in the area. Discuss the success of the Edmonds Marine Reserve, a no-take area, which has resulted in not just increasing the numbers of bottom fish but also the size of the fish that are now found there.

**Other related activity**

1. Underwater Marine Protected Area (WDFW) will enhance Bottomfish in the Keystone Jetty area.

**Long Term Goals**

Curtail overfishing

Protect Salmon Habitat and spawning grounds of bottomfish

Explore the possibilities of transplanting brood stocks.

**Education:**

Schedule presentation by Ginny Broadhurst of PSAT re MPA listing with purposes indicated (for MPA benchmark too).

Educate fisherman about the perils of over fishing

MRC - Flat Fish & Their Habitat in Island County Marine Waters

**Projects:**

Habitat mapping by Skagit MRC and MPA designations by outside agencies have begun.

Derelict Fishing Gear removal efforts continue to move forward. These initiatives will have an immediate and direct positive impact on the Bottomfish populations.

**Benchmark # 6 - Increase in Indicator Species**

Our projects have focused on forage fish (surf smelt, sand lance & herring) as a local indicator species. Determine if there is one or more indicator species in a given area. Work with State Agencies to determine which species they consider as indicator species. Determine if this dominance is seasonal, cyclical, or episodic.

**Education:**

The public needs to be made aware of the role of indicator species in determining the health of Is. Co. Marine Waters.

**Projects:**

Nearshore Project I - mapping – forage fish, eelgrass

Nearshore Project II – mapping – forage fish, eelgrass, feeder bluff study, mapping, shoreline stewards certification program – new

**Benchmark # 7 - Sharing Data**

The MRC has employed Doug Kelly to maintain a database for GIS mapping purposes. That work will yield deliverables in 2003. We need a well-coordinated effort in constructing a thorough database that includes all elements of the marine ecosystem.

Efforts should be made to facilitate data exchange among the responsible fishing and environmental agencies.

Identify one agency to have the responsibility of collating these data.

**Education:**

Public should be made aware of the existence of these data.

MRC - The Science of Data Interpretation (Kind/EI Sayed)

MRC - Data Sets and GIS - How it Works (Tate/Kelly)

**Projects:**

Continue to ensure uniform data and mapping protocols and media.

Generally: Require that all project deliverables be provided in electronic media formats as well as printed materials.

Mapping: Mapping product deliverables should include AutoCAD dwg files as well as ArcView GIS base files.

**Benchmark # 8 - Outreach and Education**

The MRC Ex. Dir. and many others have made numerous public presentations about the MRC's work, and will continue to do so in 2003. Dan has assembled a list of articles, speeches, and Power Point presentations on MRC work. We will have our display at Sound Waters, the Water Festival, and as requested.

**Projects:**

Nearshore Project I – mapping – forage fish, eelgrass, shoreline hardening – ongoing.

Nearshore Project II – mapping – forage fish, eelgrass, feeder bluff study, mapping, shoreline stewards certification program – new

Need to coordinate efforts among those agencies/entities responsible for Outreach and Educational Programs.

Education of the public should be approached in a variety of ways for maximum impact. These should include:

A public relations effort, development and distribution of brochure, posters, notification of regular educational programs conducted by the MRC during their regular meetings, development and implementation of major educational events such as Sound Waters, the Water Festival and website education.

Speakers' bureau

The media should be made aware of these projects and, where possible, publicize them.

**Projects:**

Sponsor/partner with other organizations to conduct special educational programs for the public such as the 2003 Sound Waters: Near the Shore - One Day University.

Sponsor/partner with other organizations to conduct special educational programs for the public such as the 2003 Wonders of the Islands Field Day

Design a brochure about the MRC and distribute it to local businesses that have high contact with marine resource users.

Acquire and distribute existing brochures about Puget Sound that focus on protection.

Maintain our upgraded Website (more info on projects, more links to other sites relevant to MRC work, Add workplan, Add benchmark reports.)

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### **2003 - Educational presentations for MRC public meetings (proposed)**

January	Geoducks, DNR
February	DNR aquatic reserves
March	Land Trust/ bluff birds
April	Langley shore development
May	Camano boat trip/ For.Fish PPT
June	Shore Stewards/ Research boat/ MRC Retreat
July	Tribal Presentation/Skagit Estuary work
August	Crab work/ replanting on shores/Cama
September	Doug Kelly – MRC maps
October	Coastal Geology
November	Reauthorization issues/ the Initiative post 2005
December	social