

ISLAND COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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Project Updates for November 5, 2019 Meeting

NWSC Grant Reports

Eelgrass Monitoring (Tautvydas): It appears from the results of the last few years that the decline in the extent of eelgrass beds in Cornet Bay noticed between 2010 and 2016 has stabilized. A final report of the results from 2018-2019 has been written by Gregg Ridder and has been submitted to Island County MRC and Northwest Straits Commission. Due to aging equipment, loss of personnel, especially Ken Urstad because of his health issues, and the fact that the eelgrass beds seem to be stable, no further underwater videography is planned at any sites in Island County. Gregg Ridder will continue to perform the aerial photography of eelgrass beds in Island County next year.

Kelp Monitoring (Rhodes): The season ended on September 29th, with surveys conducted at the Possession Point & Ebey's Landing beds that day. We conducted 12 monthly surveys at 3 sites, & collected 24 additional water column temperature measurements in the Possession Point bed throughout the summer. This year, beds emerged earlier & were larger than in previous years. Numerous animals were observed in the bed, including large herring schools throughout the summer. This was one of the best years for bull kelp since we began surveys in 2015.



School of herring feeding in the Ebey's Landing bed in August, 2019. (L. Rhodes)

Outreach – GlassQuest: Registration is open for the Great Northwest Glass Quest: <https://thegreatnwglassquest.com/>. MRC volunteers will be needed to help write clues and hide clue balls in community spaces on Camano.

Other Reports

Smith & Minor Islands Aquatic Reserve (Rhodes): The intertidal kelp coverage survey & kelp harvest surveys initiated in 2015 are continued in 2019. Because there is no longer a citizen stewardship committee for SMIAR, members of the Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve Citizen Stewardship Committee have participated.

Salmon Recovery Technical & Citizen Committee (Kukuk): Update at meeting.

Sound Water Stewards (Chase): SWS Executive Director Nan Maysen left her position in September. That position will not be filled; the SWS coordinators for Whidbey (Allie Hudec) and Camano (Joan Schrammeck) will jointly take over the duties of that position, with assistance by SWS Board members. Kelly Zupich will provide administrative coordination and support on a part time basis.

The volunteers working on the book Getting to the Water's Edge are currently completing their "finishing touches", according to Sarah Schmidt. Sound Waters University is scheduled to take place on Saturday, February 1st.

WSU Extension: Update at meeting.