

ISLAND COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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Project Updates for August 3, 2021 Meeting

Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Grant Reports

Outreach: Update at meeting.

Hoypus Point: Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) orchestrated and led a site visit for state and local entities involved in the permitting process. Later in August there will be surveys conducted for large woody debris (LWD) and beach wrack.

Cornet Bay Stewardship: Ann Prusha and Gwendolyn Hannam are watering and weeding bi-weekly throughout the summer months.

Other Reports

Shore Friendly: Update at meeting.

Sound Water Stewards (SWS):

- **Junior Rangers** is a state park nature program at Fort Ebey and Fort Casey for children 7-14 but is also fun for the whole family. Sound Water Stewards assist a park ranger and/or Allie as they lead participants with an exploration of seaweed, nature journaling, or how trees talk to each other. Dates for this activity are July 1, July 8, and August 26.
The Waldorf School marine camp is a Readiness to Learn program for K-3 students from the Waldorf School on Whidbey. Campers learn about and explore whales, seaweed, plastic, and plankton. The camp ran July 12-15 from 10 to noon each day with varying locations.
- **Digging for Dinner** occurred at Double Bluff County Park on July 23rd and 25th. After 45 minutes orientation, members of the public learned all about how to dig their own shellfish over the following 2 hours.
- **Island County HR Training for MRC Activities:** Volunteers who want to participate in Island County activities (including MRC activities such as bull kelp, forage fish monitoring, crabbing education, etc.) are required to attend a brief training with the county's Human Resources Department. If Sound Water Stewards are participating as part of a class activity (such as a field trip), they do not need to undergo the training. Please contact Ann Prusha (a.prusha@islandcountywa.gov or 360-678-2347) if you have questions or would like to schedule a training.
- **MRC / SWS Crabber Education:** On July 1st and 2nd, volunteers gathered at boat launches to hand out crabber education materials and crab trap escape cord as a joint MRC and SWS activity, for 2 hour shifts. Locations included boat launches at Langley, Cornet Bay, Oak Harbor, and Camano Island State Park
- **Beach Cleanups** continued at Keystone on Whidbey Island and Camano Island State Park on Camano.
- **Moon Snail Egg Educational Posters** were created and posted on both islands, educating those who walk our beaches not to pick up and discard moon snail egg shell casings, which can resemble trash to those not familiar with them.
- **Marine Mammal Stranding Network Training** will be occurring in the near future to interested volunteers on both islands.
- **Intertidal Monitoring** resumed in 2021 after the 2020 cancellation due to COVID concerns. In 2021, monitoring started in April and goes through July with data collection and species identification/observation on 12 Camano beaches and 11 Whidbey beaches. Dedicated Stewards capture beach slope, water salinity, water temperature, describe the substrate, and identify species in quadrats set up along lines at established locations where monitoring has been done for more than 25 years.
- **Bull Kelp Surveys:** Under the auspices of Island County MRC and NW Straights, SWS teams survey bull kelp beds in specific locations on Whidbey (Ebey's Landing, Polnell Point, Possession Point and Hoypus Point) and

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Camano Island (Lowell Point). This year, Stewards are taking additional water temperature tests at Possession Point and Lowell Point.

- **Pigeon Guillemot Survey:** The new-last-year Camano Pigeon Guillemot Survey Team of 7 Stewards reports they are monitoring a total of six bluff faces with possibly as many as thirty burrows on a large bluff area on the Port Susan side of Camano Island. On Whidbey, 36 Stewards report they are thoroughly enjoying their time with these delightful birds in the long-established Pigeon Guillemot surveys on Whidbey.
- **Asian Giant Hornets:** New this year, SWS has recruited 30 people to put up and maintain traps that appeal to the Invasive Asian Giant Hornets, also called Murder Hornets because they kill native bees by decapitating them. Washington Department of Agriculture is coordinating the program and providing materials.
- **Large Woody Debris and Beach Wrack Surveys:** NWSF seeks volunteers to assist in conducting large woody debris and beach wrack surveys at Cornet Bay (inside Deception Pass) on Wednesday, July 28. This is part of continued post-construction monitoring for the restoration site. The surveys are expected to take about 3 hours, 11 am to 2 pm. No prior training is required.
- **Shellfish die-off:** Following the record-breaking heat wave in June, Teri King, a shellfish biologist with Washington Sea Grant, and other officials are seeking descriptions and photographs from shoreline observers about sites of shellfish die-off possibly caused by the extreme and extended heat. Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife set up an online form for observers to fill out, or you can send information by email.

Island Local Integrating Organization: Update at meeting.