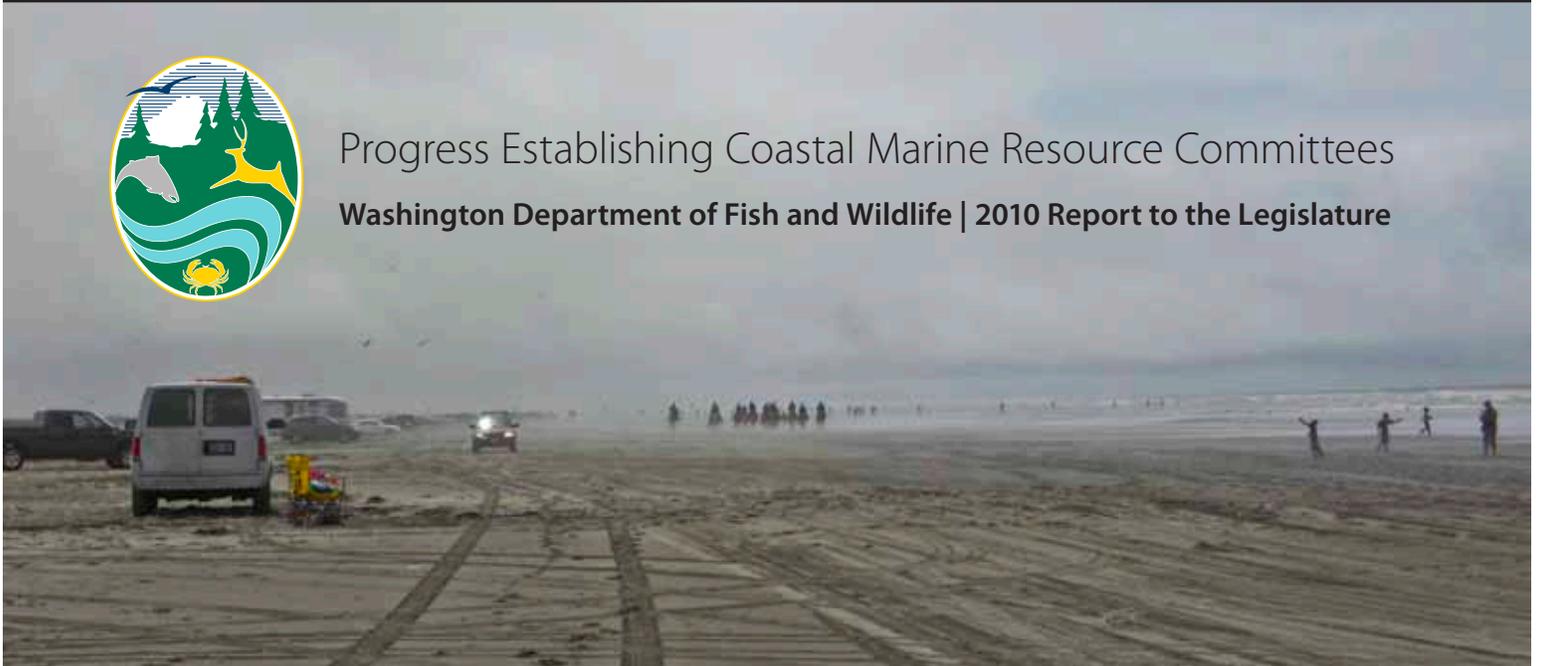




Progress Establishing Coastal Marine Resource Committees  
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife | 2010 Report to the Legislature



2010 Report to the Legislature  
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December 2010

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Top front cover: Cape Disappointment lighthouse  
Middle front cover: Kalaloch beach  
Bottom front cover: Ocean Shores beach  
Back cover: Ocean Shores beach

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	4
<b>Summary</b> .....	5
<b>Background</b> .....	7
The Northwest Straits Initiative .....	8
What are MRCs? .....	9
<b>Washington’s Coastal MRC Program</b> .....	10
Coastal MRC Program Priorities and Benchmarks .....	12
Coordination with the Northwest Straits Commission .....	16
Coordination with the State Ocean Caucus .....	16
<b>County Activity</b> .....	18
Coastal MRC Activity by Benchmark .....	18
Clallam County and Jefferson County .....	19
Grays Harbor County .....	22
Pacific County .....	24
Wahkiakum County .....	27
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	30
<b>Additional Resources</b> .....	31

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**M**arine Resource Committees (MRCs) are county-based, volunteer committees that carry out local projects and activities and advise the county on issues pertaining to marine resources. MRCs are composed of representatives from the scientific community, local and tribal governments, local citizens, and economic, recreational and conservation interests. Through their activities and monthly meetings, MRCs coordinate diverse partners, support resourceful, action-oriented solutions, and provide a platform for education and outreach on local issues. MRCs promote effective regional collaboration and citizen involvement in marine resource protection, management, and restoration.

As directed by the Washington State Legislature, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) coordinates and supports MRCs in the five coastal counties through the Coastal MRC Program. Program staff provide grants to MRCs for MRC activities and projects, account for MRC activity and deliverables, ensure that MRC activity complements regional priorities, and promote coordination and strategic partnerships among MRCs, agencies, tribes, non-governmental organizations, and other local groups. The following accomplishments highlight coastal MRC activity over the past year:

- Establishment of the final WA Coastal MRC in Wahkiakum County by County resolution, joining existing Coastal MRCs formed in 2009 in Clallam, Jefferson, Grays Harbor, and Pacific Counties
- Completion of water quality monitoring training and sampling for NOAA's National Mussel Watch Program in Grays Harbor and Pacific Counties
- Participation in public comment sessions to support the draft legislative report on Marine Spatial Planning
- Enhancement of marine science education through field trip transportation to marine and estuarine environments including the Fiero Marine Life Center, Willapa Bay and Grays Harbor National Wildlife Refuges, and the Point Defiance Zoo and Aquarium
- Initiation of filmed oral history interviews for the Gathering Our Voice project in Wahkiakum County's Lower Columbia River Estuary
- Organization of a Washington coast-wide Coastal MRC Summit sponsored by the Surfrider Foundation and The Nature Conservancy
- Scientific investigation through water quality monitoring and reporting, Spartina surveys, and a study of river otter predation on salmon
- Completion of numerous coast-wide beach and estuary garbage clean-ups

- Increased direct connection of local residents to state agencies through MRC partnerships and representation on the State Ocean Caucus
- Raised general awareness of marine and estuarine issues through MRC-sponsored newspaper publications, presence at local festivals, science-based workshops, creation of educational KIOSKs, and other outreach and communication activities

Guided by the Washington Ocean Action Plan, MRC activity will improve scientific knowledge, public understanding, protection and restoration, and management of marine habitats and species and complement ongoing efforts to preserve and enhance coastal and ocean resources.

Washington's coastal and ocean resources provide vital economic, recreation, transportation, and cultural benefits to coastal and state residents. Identifying and implementing realistic, effective, and efficient solutions to the unique conservation and management issues of Washington's outer coast requires utilizing the available knowledge and creative approaches of coastal citizens and leaders. Citizen-based Marine Resource Committees (MRCs) are an effective mechanism to harness the dedication, innovation, and wisdom of coastal residents to complement ongoing efforts to restore, protect, and manage coastal marine resources.

The Nation's coasts have received increased attention in recent years. The U.S. Ocean and Pew Commissions focused national attention on the coasts in 2006. Washington State responded with the establishment of the Washington–British Columbia Coastal and Ocean Task Force, the Ocean Policy Work Group, and the State Ocean Caucus. The Ocean Policy Work Group completed their work with the publication of the Washington Ocean Action Plan in 2006 and the West Coast Governor's Agreement on Ocean Health was announced in 2008. On June 12, 2009 the Obama Administration established the Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force to develop a national ocean policy and a framework to improve stewardship through effective coastal and marine spatial planning. On December 14, 2009 the Task Force released their *Interim Framework on Effective Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning*.<sup>1</sup> In March 2010, the Washington State Legislature passed a new law requiring the state to recommend an approach to marine spatial planning through an interagency team. A report of that recommendation was due to the Washington Legislature by December 15, 2010.<sup>2</sup>

The Washington Ocean Action Plan details the status of coastal communities and ocean resources.<sup>3</sup> In addition to significant contributions to Washington's economy, coastal resources maintain cultural identities, sustain coastal economies and communities, and provide food and opportunities for enjoyment. Although the coastal environment is relatively healthy compared to the inland waters of Puget Sound, invasive species, toxic algal blooms, coastal hazards, habitat loss, water quality, and land use issues increasingly threaten human health and safety, livelihoods, and the ecological resilience of the coastal environment. New threats include increasing coastal development, climate change and associated sea level rise, and ocean energy production. In addition, increasing unemployment and changing community population demographics threaten the coastal communities. Washington's Ocean Action Plan also provides recommendations for improving protection and management of the state's ocean resources organized under six topics: 1) marine resource stewardship, 2) coastal vulnerabilities from marine sources, 3) coastal pollution, 4) ocean research and education, 5) sustainable and resilient communities, and 6) governance. Marine Resource Committees are highlighted in the Plan as a creative and useful governance mechanism.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For more information about the Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force please visit <http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/ceq/initiatives/oceans>

<sup>2</sup> For more information on Coastal Marine Spatial Planning visit <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/msp/law.html>

<sup>3</sup> The Ocean Policy Work Group. 2006. Washington's Ocean Action Plan: Enhancing Management of Washington State's Ocean and Outer Coasts: Volume 2: Final Report of the Washington State Ocean Policy Work Group. The Office of the Governor, Olympia, WA.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, page 113-162

In the 2007 and 2008 legislative sessions, the Washington State Legislature endorsed the MRC approach to local marine resource management and stewardship in the five southern Puget Sound counties and five coastal counties.<sup>5</sup> The Legislature created a new program within the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) to provide support for the development, administration, and coordination of coastal MRCs and MRC-sponsored projects that benefit coastal and marine resources. The Puget Sound Partnership was directed to facilitate the establishment of the five southern Puget Sound MRCs.

The MRC model was first developed through the Northwest Straits Initiative in 1998. This federally-funded program supports MRCs in the seven northern Puget Sound counties<sup>6</sup> and has become a national example of effective regional collaboration and citizen involvement in marine resource protection, management, and restoration.

### **The Northwest Straits Initiative**

The Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative is a creative and distinctly local approach to marine resource management. First developed in response to a proposal by the National Marine Sanctuary Program to establish a sanctuary in northern Puget Sound, U.S. Senator Patty Murray and U.S. Representative Jack Metcalf tasked a citizen panel, called the Northwest Straits Citizens Advisory Commission and informally known as the “kitchen commission,” with developing an organic approach to marine resource stewardship.<sup>7</sup>

The Northwest Straits Initiative has evolved to consist of a Commission that acts as a board of directors to seven MRCs, overseeing and coordinating activity and providing resources and expertise. The 13-member Commission is composed of one representative from each MRC, one tribal representative appointed by the Secretary of Interior, and five gubernatorial appointees.

The authorizing legislation required a blue ribbon panel evaluation of the Northwest Straits Initiative, its Commission, and seven MRCs after five years. In addition to glowing reviews by the panel chaired by Bill Ruckelshaus, the panel concluded that the Northwest Straits Initiative was so successful at locally directed, regionally coordinated marine conservation that the approach should be replicated in other geographic locations.<sup>8</sup> Further, the panel encouraged the Northwest Straits Commission to engage in replication of the model while cautioning against overstressing the Commission staff and region of focus.

<sup>5</sup> Substitute Senate Bill 6231 and Substitute House Bill 2049 are codified in the Revised Code of Washington title 36 chapter 125.

<sup>6</sup> Northwest Straits MRCs include Snohomish, Skagit, Whatcom, Island, San Juan, Jefferson, and Clallam Counties.

<sup>7</sup> Washington Sea Grant. 1998. Murray – Metcalf Northwest Straits Citizens Advisory Commission: Report to the Convenors. Washington Sea Grant Program, University of Washington.

<sup>8</sup> Ruckelshaus et al. 2004. Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative: Five-Year Evaluation Report. Washington State University Extension and University of Washington. Page 25-26.

## What are MRCs?

MRCs – on the coast (see Map 1) and in Puget Sound – are county-based committees that carry out local projects and activities and advise the county on issues pertaining to marine resources. MRCs are created and defined by county resolution or ordinance. Counties determine operational procedures and appoint committee members. MRCs are required by statute to be broadly representative, but counties have the ability to further specify membership or committee focus according to the needs of the county, its citizenry, and marine resources.

Marine Resource Committees are composed of representatives from the scientific community, local and tribal governments, local citizens, and economic, recreational and conservation interests. Each county-based MRC sets local resource priorities and, sponsors and oversees projects to address priorities. Through their activities and monthly meetings, MRCs coordinate diverse partners, support resourceful, action-oriented solutions, and provide a platform for education and outreach on local issues.

Recognizing the existence of a similar state program focused on salmon and watershed issues, the legislature authorized Salmon Recovery Lead Entities to act as an MRC for a county in lieu of creating a new entity if practical and desirable. The Lead Entity Program organizes citizen volunteers at the watershed scale around local salmon recovery projects.<sup>9</sup> The focus of MRCs and Lead Entities is complementary, but different. For example, in rural counties significant volunteer membership overlap between Lead Entity and MRC coordination has proven to be advantageous.



Map 1. Coastal MRC Counties are highlighted.

<sup>9</sup> For more information about the Lead Entity Program, visit <http://www.rco.wa.gov/srfb/leadentities.htm>

The Coastal Marine Resource Committee Program was created within WDFW to implement 2007 and 2008 session law (SSB 6231 and SHB 2049) by providing support for the development, administration, and coordination of coastal MRCs and MRC-sponsored projects that benefit coastal marine resources. The goal of the Coastal MRC Program is:

*To understand, steward, and restore the marine and estuarine ecological processes of the Washington coast in support of ecosystem health, sustainable marine resource-based livelihoods, cultural integrity, and coastal communities.*

MRCs are still rapidly building their capacity and organizational structure, but this calendar year has seen a significant increase in MRC activity and accomplishments. Table 1 summarizes the completed Program budget for the State Fiscal Year 2010, and the planned Program budget for State Fiscal Year 2011.

Table 1. Coastal MRC Program Budget

	FY2010 (\$)	FY2011 (\$)	Biennium (\$)
Total funds	225,160	236,462	461,622
Total grant expenditures to MRCs	157,625	200,000	357,625
Total MRC Program staff expenditures	40,160	32,388	76,622

Through the Coastal MRC Program, the Legislature directed WDFW to carry out the following tasks. Bullets under each task describe current actions completed by WDFW.

### Allocate programmatic funding for MRC activities and projects

**Action:** Wahkiakum County and citizens requested coastal MRC funding to support a local process to explore the formation of an MRC. WDFW provided funds to the county to support public meetings and other “exploratory” outreach activities in advance of formal MRC formation. Additional MRC project and administrative/coordination support was allocated to the county once the MRC was formed by county resolution.

**Action:** Allocate Program funds to MRCs to support coordination and projects. \$40,000 is available for each year of the 2009/2011 biennium to each county that has formed an MRC. A one-time grant of \$25,000 is available to counties for exploratory activities (described above).

WDFW allocated \$38,000 to Clallam County (7/1/10 – 6/30/11) to support MRC activity in both Western Clallam and Jefferson Counties.<sup>10</sup>

WDFW allocated \$31,000 to Grays Harbor County (7/1/10 – 6/30/11) to support MRC activity.

WDFW allocated \$25,000 to Pacific County (7/1/10 – 6/30/11) to support MRC activity.

WDFW allocated \$23,000 to Wahkiakum County (7/1/10 – 6/30/11) to support MRC activity.

<sup>10</sup> Please see the sections on each MRC for a brief description of activities and projects.

### Assist MRCs to measure their activities against regional performance benchmarks

**Action:** WDFW convened an ad hoc advisory committee called the Coastal MRC Work Group to develop performance benchmarks. Benchmarks are used in Table 2 to account for MRC activity.

**Action:** At the conclusion of each state fiscal year, MRCs are required to report annual activities and projects. To improve future performance, reports include evaluations of both successes and challenges.

### Support the coordination of MRC projects to complement regional priorities

**Action:** WDFW reports on MRC activity monthly to the State Ocean Caucus, the group charged with overseeing implementation of the Washington Ocean Action Plan. Updates serve to highlight MRC activities, locally-identified issues or opportunities for state managers, and to inform MRC members of state activities on the coast.

**Action:** WDFW worked to facilitate participation of Grays Harbor County and Pacific County MRCs in the National Mussel Watch Program. Volunteers from each MRC were trained in sampling protocols to collect mussels and other bivalves at three designated sites for evaluation of contaminants.

**Action:** Program staff continues to build awareness within WDFW and with other natural resource agencies regarding availability of MRC volunteers for marine resource projects on the coast. Several agency activities have been identified that could benefit from volunteer labor (e.g., supplementing WDFW's ability to protect Snowy Plover nests during critical periods, and collection and disposal of derelict fishing nets and crab pots).

### Coordinate the communication and promote interactions among Coastal MRCs, other similar groups, and with the Northwest Straits Commission on issues of common interest

**Action:** For the third year, WDFW was invited to attend the annual Northwest Straits Commission Training Conference to answer questions about MRC activity on the coast, exchange information, and promote collaboration between Coastal and Northwest Straits MRCs.

**Action:** At the request of the Commission, Coastal MRC Program staff traveled to the March Commission meeting at the Dungeness River Audubon Center in Clallam County and provided an update on the activities of the Coastal MRC Program.

**Action:** WDFW continues to provide briefings on Coastal MRC activity to County Commissioners, Northwest Straits MRCs, and the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Committee when appropriate.

**Action:** WDFW worked with the State Ocean Caucus to ensure a representative from each MRC was invited to participate in the regular working group. This allowed the opportunity for MRCs to share updates on local MRC issues with state agencies, represent MRC interests and perspectives on State Ocean Caucus activities, coordinate on shared interests, and communicate key items back to the broader MRC membership.

**Action:** WDFW continues to maintain a website dedicated to the Coastal MRC Program providing updates and announcements for upcoming activities with links to current individual MRC websites that contain contact information for county-based coordinators.

**Coordinate the communication and promote interactions among Coastal MRCs, other similar groups, and with the Northwest Straits Commission on issues of common interest (continued)**

**Action:** WDFW participated on the Coastal MRC Summit Steering Committee providing planning and logistical support for event and agenda development. WDFW also provided a status update at the Summit and answered questions for the Q&A panel discussion.

**Action:** WDFW provided planning, logistical, facilitation, and note taking support for an open public comment session hosted by the State Ocean Caucus and The Nature Conservancy on marine spatial planning. The session, separate but on the second day of 2010 Coastal MRC Summit, was very well attended by all MRCs and citizens from coastal areas.

**Action:** WDFW provided planning, program presentation, and logistical support for Wahkiakum Exploratory meetings and early MRC meetings.

**Coastal MRC Program Priorities and Benchmarks**

In January 2009, the Coastal MRC Program staff held the last of four meetings of the Coastal MRC Work Group, an ad hoc advisory committee to the Coastal MRC Program. This group was tasked with articulating Program priorities and developing performance benchmarks to guide Coastal MRC activity and ensure coordination with other efforts and accountability to WDFW and ultimately the legislature. The Coastal MRC Work Group was broadly representative of the following coastal interests:

- **Citizens**, Lead Entities, and coastal salmon recovery and water quality partnerships/councils.
- **Governmental representatives** from the Makah, Quileute, Hoh Tribes, the Quinault Indian National, and the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission. Federal representatives from the National Marine Sanctuaries Program. State representatives from the Washington Department of Natural Resources, WDFW, and the Puget Sound Partnership. County representatives from Pacific, Clallam, Grays Harbor, Jefferson Counties, as well as City, Port, and Conservation District representatives.
- **Environmental and conservation interests** representatives from the Surfrider Foundation, The Nature Conservancy, and Friends of Grays Harbor.
- **Industry representatives** from commercial and recreational fishing associations and private business.
- **University** extension program representatives.

Over a series of four meetings, the Coastal MRC Program Work Group developed a Program goal statement, articulated and agreed on Program priorities, and developed a series of performance benchmarks. Because the Coastal MRC Program Work Group anticipated the need to adjust and

adapt the benchmarks and priority statements over time, the group agreed to use the term interim to describe benchmarks and priority statements. These interim benchmark and priority statements were adopted by consensus and will be upheld by the work group until they are amended by group decision in the future. Also, each MRC will need to develop its own local priorities and objectives. The programmatic benchmarks are not intended to restrict the ability of individual counties to carry out activities that may fall outside the existing benchmarks as long as they address the overarching Program goal.

The following priority statements are used to guide the development of the Coastal MRC Program and focus the work of coastal MRCs. These priorities, or operating principles, include:

Establish MRCs	<p>Establish coastal MRCs in order to provide a non-regulatory mechanism to discuss and develop solutions for issues facing coastal resources and communities</p> <p>Ensure MRC and program accountability and alignment with regional priorities by measuring performance against program benchmarks</p> <p>Act in consult with tribal and state co-managers</p> <p>Ensure that local residents are selected and participate in MRCs</p>
Complement existing efforts	<p>Complement and support ongoing efforts to improve scientific knowledge, public understanding, conservation and restoration, and management of marine resources</p>
Build partnerships	<p>Coordinate and communicate with MRCs, the Northwest Straits Commission, tribal and state co-managers, local, regional, federal, and other stakeholders and organizations about local and regional projects and issues</p> <p>Expand partnerships with tribal governments and continue to foster respect for tribal cultures and treaties</p> <p>Communicate coastal issues to the Governor’s office and the State Ocean Caucus</p>
Utilize science	<p>Conduct scientific investigations and monitoring efforts to fill key gaps in knowledge about valuable coastal species and habitats (e.g., ecosystem-based management)</p> <p>Monitor and assess impacts of coastal and marine development</p>

Promote healthy communities and resources

- Promote healthy coastal communities through improved infrastructure and sustainable practices relating to marine resources
- Promote marine resource stewardship through community volunteer opportunities and public education efforts
- Promote coastal hazards awareness and community preparedness through education and outreach programs
- Support the conservation and restoration of coastal habitats, and marine populations to healthy and sustainable levels and prevent future state and federal species listings
- Conduct and implement strategic planning to identify marine resource related threats to and opportunities for sustainability
- Assess sources of and reduce marine and estuarine pollution and debris

Performance benchmarks are used by the Coastal MRC Program to account for MRC activities and achievement in discrete but broad categories. Benchmarks developed and adopted by the Coastal MRC Program include:

1. **Marine Habitats:** Understand, steward, and restore marine, estuarine, coastal, and nearshore habitats, prevent loss, and achieve a net gain of healthy habitat areas by:
  - a. enhancing ecosystem and community resilience by protecting and restoring marine and coastal habitats
  - b. designing and implementing local and regional projects that restore natural processes
  - c. surveying and mapping marine and estuarine resources to better define physical and biological characteristics of marine habitats
  - d. making scientifically-based recommendations about management tools to protect marine and estuarine habitats
  - e. understanding and evaluating erosion and promoting sound sediment management practices
2. **Marine Life:** Understand, steward, and restore marine and estuarine populations to healthy, sustainable levels by:
  - a. maintaining the health of marine and estuarine species and preventing further ESA listings while increasing access to marine resource enjoyment and harvest where feasible
  - b. balancing protection focus on ecosystem versus target species
  - c. identifying and carrying out actions to protect and restore species of interest and concern
  - d. designing and implementing projects to prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species
  - e. making scientifically-based recommendations about management tools for species recovery

3. **Marine and Fresh Water Quality:** Understand, steward, and restore marine and estuarine water quality of Washington's coast and coastal embayments by:
  - a. conducting or supporting science to fill critical data gaps
  - b. working to reduce the input of pollutants
  - c. promoting management actions that would restore degraded water quality and contaminated sediment
  - d. working with and training students and citizens to conduct water quality monitoring
4. **Sound Science:** Collect high quality data and promote its transparent presentation, acceptance, and timely dissemination by:
  - a. utilizing established scientific protocols for the collection, analysis and use of data that support the Coastal MRC Program goal
  - b. identifying gaps in data and working to fill those gaps by promoting the development of comprehensive, accessible marine resource databases
  - c. promoting peer reviewed science
5. **Education and Outreach:** Promote stewardship and understanding of coastal estuarine and marine resources through science-based education and outreach by:
  - a. informing the public about threats to living resources and coastal communities and presenting them with practical measures they can take to prevent further harm especially regarding land use, erosion control, and individual homeowner decisions
  - b. informing citizens and governmental agencies about ocean energy activities and associated effects on coastal communities
  - c. coordinating outreach and education programs with other organizations, including local community colleges, and evaluating their effectiveness
  - d. engaging the public in active stewardship opportunities through community workshops, restoration projects, and educational programming
  - e. translating and disseminating scientific information about the status of Washington's coastal habitats, resources, and communities to regional policy makers, resource managers, and the public in a timely manner
  - f. expanding partnerships with tribal governments and continuing to foster respect for tribal cultures and treaties
  - g. striving to maintain and improve coordination and communication among stakeholders and all managers.
6. **Coastal Communities:** Promote sustainable and resilient coastal communities by:
  - a. supporting sustainable marine resource-based industries
  - b. supporting cultural and economic integrity of coastal communities
  - c. encouraging citizen participation in local and governmental decisions regarding marine resources
  - d. engaging in activities aimed at hazard prevention and preparedness, e.g. education
  - e. increasing sustainable access to marine resource enjoyment and harvest

### **Coordination with the Northwest Straits Commission**

The Northwest Straits (NWS) Commission has expressed solid support of the expansion of the MRC model and of development of MRCs on Washington's Coast. Commission members and Commission staff have attended Coastal MRC Work Group meetings and made themselves available to the Coastal MRC Program staff to field questions and convey lessons learned over the past decade. The Coastal MRC Program is stronger and more likely to produce successful outcomes as a result of the Commission's support.

The Northwest Straits Commission hosts an annual MRC training conference to provide an opportunity for MRCs to share ideas and coordinate approaches to marine conservation and protection. At its 2010 training conference (November 5-6, Orcas Island), the Northwest Straits Commission invited Coastal MRC Program staff to attend and present a poster on the Coastal MRC Program and progress establishing MRCs on the coast. North Pacific Coast MRC Jefferson County coordinator, Tami Pokorny, joined WDFW staff as a guest at the NWS Conference. This served as an opportunity to communicate and coordinate future efforts with the NWS MRCs in Clallam and Jefferson Counties. The NWS Commission and MRC members continue to be supportive of replication of the model and interested in progress made to date. The session provided an opportunity to build support and awareness for Coastal MRCs among Northwest Straits MRC members and document common interests in anticipation of future opportunities for coastal and Northwest Straits MRCs to collaborate on projects of mutual benefit. Program staff also gained a broader understanding of how the Commission and MRCs effectively and successfully interact on contract and programmatic issues.

NWS and Coastal MRCs collaborated on a project through the National Mussel Watch Program. This program run by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is part of the longest running contaminant monitoring program in the U.S. coastal waters and has been tracking contaminants in mussels and other bivalves since 1986. Biannual mussel collection for testing has been supported by volunteers from the NWS MRCs in years past. In February 2010, volunteers from the Pacific County and Grays Harbor County MRCs took on responsibility for sampling the three designated coastal sites after receiving training in sampling protocol from a representative from the Snohomish County MRC. Samples collected were shipped to labs for analysis for over 100 chemical contaminants and the results will contribute to the national database. This long-running dataset and volunteer training in rigorous sampling protocols could provide a foundation on which MRCs may choose to build additional water quality activities.

### **Coordination with the State Ocean Caucus**

The State Ocean Caucus considers local involvement in coastal and ocean management issues, projects, and stewardship initiatives promoted by MRCs to be among its accomplishments. The

State Ocean Caucus' predecessor organization, the Ocean Policy Work Group, recommended in its report, Washington Ocean Action Plan, replication of the NWS MRC model on the coast to improve the existing governance structure in order to support improved marine resource management and protection.

The State Ocean Caucus continues to receive monthly briefings from Coastal MRC Program staff on MRC establishment progress and emerging issues and opportunities. Coordination between the State Ocean Caucus and MRCs has proved advantageous for all involved and has led to improved communication and collaboration such that at the State Ocean Caucus' outreach event on the coast this year (April 27th in Westport), the State Ocean Caucus worked with local MRC members to determine topic areas of interest locally, advertise the meeting, and provide a local 'welcome' at the meeting.

In support of improved coordination between state agencies and local jurisdictions, groups, and citizens, the State Ocean Caucus issued a formal letter of invitation in December 2009 to Coastal MRCs to participate in regular State Ocean Caucus meetings. All established MRC Chairs enthusiastically accepted the invitation and participated in the monthly meetings during 2010 to represent MRC interests, share updates on local MRC issues and activities, learn about state agency activities and communicate key items back to MRC members.

### **2010 Coastal MRC Summit**

Since the Coastal MRC Work Group last met in 2009 (see page 12), there had been discussion among MRC boards about meeting as a region to plan, coordinate, and potentially collaborate on marine resource projects. The idea for a 2010 Coastal MRC Summit started to take shape when the Grays Harbor MRC took the lead in August to secure funding. A steering committee of MRC coordinators and WDFW Program staff was formed to plan the agenda and locate an appropriate meeting site. The Surfrider Foundation and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) provided funding to pay for the entire Summit, including the meeting facility, facilitation and summary report, food for the two day event, and hotel accommodations for all of the Coastal MRC board members. The Summit was hosted on September 29th and 30th at the Chateau Westport in Westport, WA. Strategic planning resulted in a central location for the facilitated discussions, fieldtrip to the Bottle Beach State Park, informative presentations, and coordination with TNC sponsored Coastal Marine Spatial Planning Public Comment Session at the Maritime Museum on the second day of the Summit. The MRCs used the Summit to develop marine resource focused project ideas essential to stakeholders across all of the MRCs, as well as defining how to communicate coastal issues with one shared voice. Participants reported that the Summit was a worthwhile and motivational experience.



PHOTO BY  
JENNA NORMAN

Figure 1. 2010 Coastal MRC Summit participants gather at the field trip to Bottle Beach State Park.

WDFW invited all five counties – Clallam, Jefferson, Pacific, Grays Harbor, and Wahkiakum – to develop MRCs. Following outreach efforts and a series of public scoping meetings beginning in 2008, all of the counties have formed an MRC. Wahkiakum was the remaining county to complete their “exploratory” activities, which they finished in June. The MRC was formally established in September. Each county received coordination and project funding for 2010.

**Coastal MRC Activity by Benchmark**

MRCs are still very new on the coast of Washington and have only recently been formalized by County action. In spite of challenges inherent in starting any new organization and endeavor, Coastal MRCs are achieving on-the-ground results through their initial activities and projects. To date, MRCs have been most active in the benchmark areas of Education and Outreach and Coastal Communities (Table 2), but have developed and completed a number of projects that address the areas of Marine and Fresh Water Quality, Marine Life and Marine Habitats.

Table 2. MRC activity by benchmark.

Project/Activity by county	Coastal MRC Benchmarks					
	Marine Habitats	Marine Life	Marine and Fresh Water Quality	Sound Science	Education and Outreach	Coastal Communities
<b>Clallam/ Jefferson County MRC</b>						
Beach garbage clean-up	█	█	█	█	█	█
Community outreach and education events	█	█	█	█	█	█
Marine science field trips for students	█	█	█	█	█	█
River otter predation on salmon study and lab results	█	█	█	█	█	█
West End MRC newsletter publication	█	█	█	█	█	█
State Ocean Caucus participation	█	█	█	█	█	█
MRC organization and scoping	█	█	█	█	█	█
<b>Grays Harbor County MRC</b>						
Water quality monitoring and results reporting	█	█	█	█	█	█
Mussel Watch Program training and sampling	█	█	█	█	█	█
Community outreach and education events	█	█	█	█	█	█
Chehalis River Basin Drops of Water publication	█	█	█	█	█	█
Beach and marina garbage clean-ups	█	█	█	█	█	█
Classroom assistance	█	█	█	█	█	█

Project/Activity by county	Coastal MRC Benchmarks						
	Marine Habitats	Marine Life	Marine and Fresh Water Quality	Sound Science	Education and Outreach	Coastal Communities	
Coastal field trip transportation							
State Ocean Caucus participation							
MRC Blog							
Host first Washington MRC Coastal Summit							
MRC organization and scoping							
<b>Pacific County MRC</b>							
Beach garbage clean-ups							
Spartina survey							
Mussel Watch Program training and sampling							
Water quality surveys							
2010 Coastal Summit: Your Coastal System							
Educational KIOSK and banners							
Field trips for marine and estuarine education							
State Ocean Caucus participation							
MRC organization and scoping							
<b>Wahkiakum County MRC</b>							
Gathering Our Voices oral history interviews							
State Ocean Caucus participation							
MRC organization and scoping							

 Benchmarks addressed by activity

### Clallam County and Jefferson County

After forming a joint Jefferson and Clallam County MRC (officially known as the North Pacific Coast (NPC) MRC) in the fall of 2009, the two Counties signed an Inter-Local Agreement allowing them to share funding and staff resources. The County Commissioners appointed a diverse group of individuals to fill the seats on the committee (Table 3, see page 20).



North Pacific Coast MRC logo

Table 3. North Pacific Coast MRC Membership and Representation.

Member name	Organizations	Category	MRC representation
Rich Osborne	Clallam County	Coordinator/Facilitator	Non-voting
Tami Pokorny	Jefferson County	Government (Outreach Coordinator)	Voting Member
Steve Allison	Hoh Tribe	Government	Voting Member
Katie Krueger	Quileute Tribe	Government	Voting Member
Jennifer Hagen	Quileute Tribe	Government	(Alternate) V.M.
Micah McCarty	Makah Tribe	Government	Voting Member
Rod Fleck	City of Forks	Government	Voting Member
Colby Brady	Clallam County	Citizen	Voting Member
John Hunter	Clallam County	Citizen	Voting Member
Roy Morris	Clallam County	Citizen	Voting Member
John Richmond	Jefferson County	Citizen	Voting Member
Jill Silver	Jefferson County	Citizen	Voting Member
OPEN	Jefferson County	Citizen	Voting Member
Liam Antrim	Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary	Ex-Officio	Non-voting
Kathy Steichen	Olympic National Park	Ex-Officio	Non-voting

Due to the timing of appointing official members to the committee, the North Pacific Coast MRC developed a work plan primarily utilizing the project ranking list created during the 2008 Exploratory Coastal MRC process. This enabled the MRC to carry out and complete projects by the end of the contract in June. NPC MRC focused on three main areas of work including community education and outreach, scientific study, and beach clean-up. The combination of projects completed addressed all of the Program Benchmarks. The projects include funding and participating in a well organized beach clean-up on April 17th with 486 volunteers removing 4.3 tons of debris (see Figure 2), hosting a second Annual MRC Community Potluck that served as a venue to discuss coastal issues and receive public input on specific marine resource needs for West Clallam and Jefferson Counties, and also sponsoring field trips to the Feiro Marine Life Center for all fourth and fifth grade students from Cape Flattery to Queets



PHOTO BY TAMI POKORNY

Figure 2. Liam Antrim, NPC MRC board member, displaying some of the trash collected from the beach south of the Hoh River at the annual beach clean-up.

School District. In addition, the Marine Center continued to provide programs to middle and high schools on this section of the outer coast to examine ocean issues and current research questions.

Another important project addressing the Sound Science Benchmark, was sponsoring a study of river otter predation on ESA listed Lake Ozette Sockeye along the coastal outlet of the Ozette River. NPC MRC also invested in a printed newsletter to comprehensively describe the activities accomplished by the MRC, which also served as a mechanism to solicit future volunteers and participation on the MRC (See Figure 3). To ensure effective regional collaboration and coordination, a representative from the NPC MRC attended the State Ocean Caucus meetings to share the interests and perspectives on behalf of the entire MRC membership, give updates on local issues and activities, learn about state agency activity, coordinate on shared interests, and communicate key items back to the broader MRC membership. A good portion of the MRC also attended the Coastal MRC Summit in Westport (described above).



Figure 3. Art submission from Lauren Decker to the NPC MRC 2010 Kids Art Contest, featured in the NPC MRC Newsletter.

The NPC MRC's prioritized future actions include three major themes of activity: 1) refinement and further development of its organizational structure to improve efficiency and effectiveness in its operations, 2) a continued commitment to engage the local community in shaping the future of their marine resources through participation in the design and implementation of on the ground projects, and 3) a new commitment to a regional partnership with the other coastal MRCs as part of a strategy to engage the new federal mandate for Coastal Marine Spatial Planning (CMSP).

As a committee that was formed through the amalgamation of two counties rather than just one, twice the amount of inter-governmental agreements were necessary to put in place and maintain each year in order to get the NPC MRC committee legally up and running. In 2010, these agreements were in place ahead of time and a committee was officially appointed at the beginning of the fiscal year, instead of having to wait six months for the enabling agreements to be drafted, reviewed and approved to allow a committee to begin holding meetings and addressing issues. This has allowed the committee to pass its Bylaws, draft its Ground Rules and begin work on a strategic plan, and to take the time to internally develop an approach for soliciting projects that promises to be more responsive to community needs. Out of the expanded work period provided this summer and fall, the committee has focused upon developing projects that prioritize public participation through citizen

science or the sharing of past experience and local knowledge; recognizing that these are potentially the most effective avenues to engender local support and long lasting commitment.

Finally, NPC MRC is actively enrolled with the other coastal MRCs in helping to identify a unifying “partnership” with the coastal tribes and maritime communities so they can speak with a single voice in promotion of coastal initiatives. The NPC MRC recognizes that as the region encounters new proposals for coastal energy development, off-shore aquaculture and other profit ventures, and as Washington State addresses the federal mandate of the CMSP initiative, it is imperative that the outer coast develop a democratic institutional identity that can compete for regional scale funding opportunities on an equal basis with the Puget Sound Partnership and the Lower Columbia River Estuary Partnership. The members of the MRC believe the coastal MRCs have a valuable role to play in the development of this new partnership and have prioritized their participation to help implement it.

### Grays Harbor County

Grays Harbor County was the first county to initiate MRC activities and the first to form an MRC by county resolution. After establishment in March of 2009, County Commissioners invited a broad range of local individuals to fill representative positions on the Grays Harbor County MRC (Table 4)

Table 4. Grays Harbor County MRC Membership and Representation.

Member name	Organizations	MRC representation
Garrett Dalan	Grays Harbor County	Coordinator
Bob Burkle	WDFW	Science Community
Don Harders	Lone Tree Oyster	Aquaculture
Francis Estalilla	Private citizen	Sport Fishing
Eric Delvin	The Nature Conservancy	Conservation
Harvey Lilligard	Olympia Master Builders	Economic
Heidi Happonen	Ocean Companies	Economic/Commercial Fishing
Joe Schumacker	Quinault Indian Nation	Local Tribal Government
Kathy Greer	Surfrider Foundation	Recreation
Lorena Marchant	Grays Harbor College	Education
Mark Plackett	Ocean Shores	Citizen
Mike Sanderson	Westport Charterboats	Recreational Fishing
R.D. Grunbaum	Friends of Grays Harbor	Conservation
Ray Toste	Washington Crab Fishers	Commercial Fishing
Roberta Davenport	Dept of Natural Resources	State Agency
Robin Leraas	Port of Grays Harbor	Local Government



*Grays Harbor MRC logo*

Grays Harbor MRC activities have focused on topic areas including outreach and education, water quality assessment and monitoring, and community workshops. Water quality assessment and monitoring activities have involved the collection of water samples at two sites in Grays Harbor. Samples are analyzed for bacteria, temperature, virus, pH, salinity, plankton, conductivity and other factors. To assist in accurate sample collection, the MRC acquired a handheld multi-parameter system for collecting a variety of water quality parameters. Results are available on the Grays Harbor MRC website.<sup>11</sup> In addition to this standard water quality monitoring, Grays

Harbor MRC members participated in the National Mussel Watch Program by attending training and gathering samples according to protocol.

Grays Harbor MRC sponsored a successful community forum on the Ocean Observation Initiative called 20,000 Gigabits Under the Sea. This presentation by John Delaney, Jack Barth and Jean McGovern brought in over a 100 interested participants who enjoyed high-definition footage from the ocean floor. This presentation was filmed and the MRC will distribute DVDs to schools and other interested groups. As mentioned above, the Coastal MRC Summit was hosted in September by Grays Harbor MRC in Westport. The Grays Harbor MRC put a great deal of effort into assisting The Nature Conservancy and the Surfrider Foundation to make the Summit successful. Also organized by The Nature Conservancy on the second day of the Summit was a comment session for the draft legislative report on Marine Spatial Planning. Coordinating this effort allowed all MRCs to participate in both important events. Input from this session will be included in the draft report. Similarly to the other established MRCs, Grays Harbor MRC has also sent a representative to State Ocean Caucus meetings to share the interests and perspectives on behalf of the MRC.

The MRC's outreach and education activities have included organization and staffing of a booth at the Annual Chehalis Watershed Festival in Aberdeen. The MRC has also sponsored three issues of Drops of Water to raise awareness about the MRC and solicit volunteers. Drops of Water is a bi-monthly publication distributed to newspaper readers throughout the Chehalis Watershed published by the Chehalis River Basin Council. As part of its ongoing activities, the MRC also maintains both a website and a blog for communication and outreach. The MRC was also proud to provide mini-grants for transportation of hundreds of students to the marine environment for outdoor education and hands-on learning activities (See Figure 4), and to create ocean



PHOTO BY STEPHANIE KLINGER

*Figure 4. Mark and Luke Sigler collect a sample in a plankton net at Point Grenville during a field trip from Beacon Elementary in Montesano.*

<sup>11</sup> Grays Harbor County MRC Website: [http://www.co.grays-harbor.wa.us/info/pub\\_svcs/MRC/index.html](http://www.co.grays-harbor.wa.us/info/pub_svcs/MRC/index.html)

literacy kits (See Figure 5) to be loaned to teachers to help bring the ocean into the classroom. The MRC also worked with volunteers to remove over a ton of garbage from local beaches (See Figure 6).

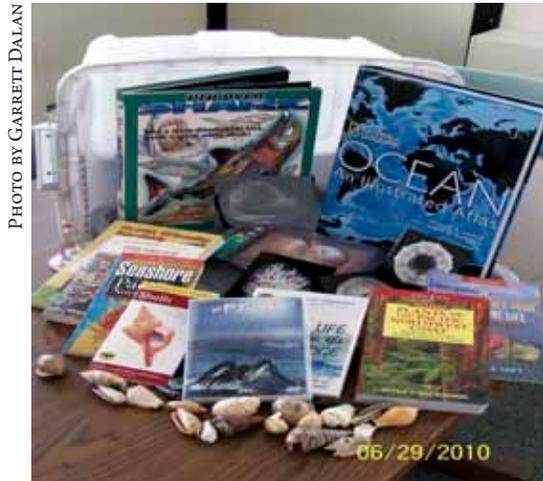


PHOTO BY GARRETT DALAN



PHOTO BY JANEL SPAULDING

Figure 5 (left). The Grays Harbor County Marine Resource Committee purchased supplies for, and assembled, four Ocean Kits to be loaned out to local classrooms to supplement field trips and other ocean curriculum.

Figure 6 (right). Volunteers remove what remains of a boat during a beach clean up where the Chehalis River enters Grays Harbor.

Future priority projects in the Winter and Spring of 2011 include continued water quality monitoring and assessment, activities promoting marine science education for school children both in the classroom and in the field, participation in Coastal Marine Spatial Planning, beach cleanups, creosote piling survey and abandoned gear clean up, and a community workshop featuring University of Washington’s interactive ocean monitoring activities.

### Pacific County

Pacific County Commissioners established the Pacific County MRC as a subcommittee of the existing Willapa Bay Water Resources Coordinating Council in fall of 2009. Following the formation, the County Commissioners appointed a robust group of individuals and alternates to fill the seats on the committee representing all of the marine resources related interests in the county (Table 5).

Table 5. Grays Harbor County MRC Membership and Representation.

Member name	Organizations	Alternate	Organization	MRC representation
Mike Nordin	Pacific Conservation District			Coordinator
Jim Neva	Port of Ilwaco	Mary DeLong	Port of Pennisula	MRC Chair, Ports
Faith Taylor-Eldred	Pacific County	Mike DeSimone	Pacific County	Local Government

Member name	Organizations	Alternate	Organization	MRC representation
Doug Kess	Local Citizen	Key McMurry	Local Citizen	Local Citizens
Ross Barkhurst	Anglers Association	Michael Spencer		Recreational Groups
Cathy Russ	EDC	Dan Todd	Port of Chinook	Economic Groups
Ammie Ammer	CREST	Micah Russell	CREST	Conservation/ Environmental Groups
Kim Patten	WSU	Tom Kollasch	TNC	Scientific Community
Mike McGinniss	Shoalwater Tribe	Ray Gardner	Chinook Tribe	Tribal Governments
Tim Morris	Oyster Aquaculture	Dave Nisbet		Aquaculture
Dale Beasley	Columbia River Crab Fishermen's Association	Dwight Eager		Commercial Fishing
Will Greene	City of Ilwaco	Steve Russell	City of South Bend	Cities
Julie Tennis	State Parks	Rob Allen	WDFW Forks Hatchery	State/Federal Government
Steve Harbell	WSU Extension	Boyd Keyser	Ocean Beach School District	Education
Sue Pattillo	Small Forest Land Owner	Allen "Jim" Goulter	Dairyman	Agriculture

Pacific County MRC (PCMRC) developed and completed a diverse group of projects that focused on water quality assessments, invasive species surveys, and education and outreach. PCMRC sponsored and volunteered in three (January, April and July) beach clean-ups along the Long Beach Peninsula's 28-mile beach organized by the Grass Roots Garbage Gang inspiring hundreds of volunteers (See Figure 7).



PHOTO BY PACIFIC COUNTY MRC

Figure 7. Pacific County MRC volunteers worked with the Grass Roots Garbage Gang to pick up this garbage from the beach.

The MRC has also participated in the State Ocean Caucus meetings by sending a representative from the committee to build partnerships, and to increase citizen participation in local and governmental decisions regarding marine and estuarine resources. In the late fall of 2010, the PCMRC focused its strategic planning sub-committee on regional planning efforts to identify, organize, and promote a unifying “partnership” mentioned above in the North Pacific Coast MRC summary. After a December planning meeting including the NPC MRC, Grays Harbor MRC, and PCMRC, the group agreed to meet in January to discuss this idea further.

PCMRC was involved in multiple projects that addressed the Sound Science Benchmark including water quality surveys conducted by the county to test for failing septic systems in Tokeland, participation in the National Mussel Watch Program through volunteer training and site sampling; and sponsoring a Spartina survey. The Coastal Resources Alliance trained a group of volunteers to scout and document the presence of Spartina. The results of this survey were used to identify and map infestation spots that were later treated by crews.

PCMRC emphasized their individual priorities in the Education and Outreach Benchmark by sponsoring the *2010 Coastal Summit: Your Coastal System* to educate the MRC members and public about marine and estuarine issues. Some of the topics presented at the summit included ecosystem and razor clam management, Spartina eradication and their impacts on shorebird populations and native marsh succession, and coastal hazards and tsunamis. The MRC also focused effort on working with local high school students to design and build a local KIOSK to educate citizens and local students about marine and estuarine issues. Finally, PCMRC sponsored transportation for educational field trips and curriculum development to promote learning about the sciences associated with the natural marine resources of the region. This funding was dedicated to Ocean Beach, Raymond, South Bend, Willapa Valley, and Naselle School Districts (See Figures 8 and 9).



PHOTO BY PACIFIC COUNTY MRC

PHOTO BY PACIFIC COUNTY MRC

Figure 8 (left). Raymond fifth-grade students on a field trip to the Forks Creek Fish Hatchery.

Figure 9 (right). Students from Willapa Valley Elementary visiting the Willapa Bay National Wildlife Refuge to learn about shellfish, mud critters, frogs, mammal skulls, soils, raptors, and bird watching.

Future priority projects for the PCMRC include debris removal in Willapa Bay, native plant nursery and environmental education, and continued water quality studies and continued support for the three beach clean-ups. Due to organizational timing, PCMRC has accomplished a variety of well developed projects in a short period of time, and appreciates the partnerships developed through many different interest groups working towards common goals at a local level. The MRC is looking into grant writing to possibly find and receive funds from additional sources to take over many current

projects, so that the group can use the existing project funds in new areas. The PCMRC would also like to find larger funding sources to attack large ticket projects such as oil spill prevention, intertidal fish passage projects, helping with material recruitment on beaches, expand educational programs throughout the county, and invasive species removal. The PCMRC also intends to keep involved in Olympia on critical issues about the marine and estuarine environment and the natural resource industries that the community relies on.

## Wahkiakum County

Wahkiakum County began the MRC exploratory process early in the year by presenting the MRC model to stakeholder and citizen groups throughout the county. Carrie Kennedy, Washington State University Wahkiakum County Extension Director, was appointed by the County Commissioners to lead the exploratory activities. As in other coastal counties, the purpose of these meetings was to familiarize local organizations and citizens with the MRC model, explore projects and activities that could be accomplished through an MRC, and ultimately facilitate a local decision about whether to pursue forming an MRC. Coastal MRC Program staff supported the exploratory process by attending meetings to present information about the program, other MRCs, and answer questions as they arose. Wahkiakum Exploratory MRC developed a Gathering Our Voice oral history project during this process that focused on training 4-H youth to interview and gather stories from local citizens on their history, connections and feelings around life on the Columbia River estuary. The purpose of the project was to build community knowledge and insight, and support for the resources that they steward (See Figures 10).

Once established, Wahkiakum MRC organized an Open House in November to identify the types of activities the MRC would like to focus on, as well as gather ideas on which MRC seats would fully represent Wahkiakum County's stakeholder groups



PHOTO BY NANCY WARNER

Figure 10. 4-H Youth Abby Buennagel interviews Carol Ervest on life on the Columbia River Estuary. Carol is a longtime resident on Grays Bay and Deep River, and daughter of a commercial fisherman and mother of a charterboat captain.



PHOTO BY JENNA NORMAN

Figure 11. Potential committee members and coordinator of the newly formed Wahkiakum MRC gather at the Coastal MRC Summit.

on the committee. Table 6 displays the list created at the Open House of potential stakeholders for the committee.

Table 6. Wahkiakum MRC Potential Membership and Representation

Stakeholder Category	Suggested Stakeholder
Governmental Agencies	USFWS, Joel David WDNR, Monica Schumacher WDFW, Pat Frazier BOCC, Lisa Marsyla 4-County Fishing Coalition
Fishermen	Mike Backman Kent Martin Troy Blix Chris Doumit Mike Clark
Economic Interests	Port 1 Port 2 Chamber – LEPC
Conservation Interests	Conservation District – Darren Houpt Diking District
Recreational Interests	Mark Whitacre Andrew Emlen
Citizens	Carol Ervest David Walstrom Carol Carver George Exum
Scientists	Rob Stockhouse Thea Pyle CREST (Columbia River Estuary Study Taskforce)
School	Kyle Herly Jeff Rookidge Jim Houten Debbie Denny
Forestry / Agriculture	Tony Aggritor Dan Kaufer Austin Burkhalter Fred Johnson

Priority future actions are to: 1) fully establish representation for the Wahkiakum County MRC from area organizations and interests, 2) complete and publicize the Gathering Our Voice project created during the exploratory process, and 3) develop action items/community projects to gain momentum and build volunteerism around marine resources in Wahkiakum County. The specific focus areas for future MRC activity discussed at the Open House were MRC organization and outreach, fisherman promotion, manage invasive species, marine debris removal, education on economic importance of marine resources in the county, investing in children through education, and community education on water quality.

Now in its third full year of operation, the Coastal MRC Program is well established and enjoys strong support from coastal counties, federal and state natural resource agencies, citizens, and industry and conservation groups. These entities and the MRCs themselves are well aware that in tight budget times, relatively small grants to local MRCs are a cost effective way to ensure that marine resources are well managed, protected, and, where necessary, restored. Providing local groups with funding to support their top priorities sends a powerful message of trust and value in local communities. The carefully crafted parameters of the Coastal MRC Program provide assurance to WDFW and the Legislature that MRCs will contribute to improved stewardship of coastal resources. Through minimal funding for MRC coordinators, the Coastal MRC Program provides essential support to local jurisdictions to continue promoting conservation of marine resources. County-based MRC coordinators report good attendance at meetings and enthusiasm for the flexibility offered by the MRC model. In this way, MRCs provide a positive outlet for citizens to contribute to making their communities a better place to live and work in the ways they choose.

Ongoing challenges include large geographic distances between communities. Attending monthly MRC meetings in-person often means driving an hour or more each way for MRC members. Conference calls, email correspondence, and rotating meeting locations, and having alternate board members make participation more feasible. The other prominent challenge is the slow pace of forming an MRC, allocating project funds, and carrying out projects. This pace is due to the need to secure buy-in at the local level through numerous outreach events and meetings as well as the logistical challenges of executing contractual agreements between WDFW and counties for carrying out MRC-defined deliverables. Both of these contributors to the slow pace are expected to improve with time and experience of all parties involved. Issues associated with merging or not merging local MRCs with Lead Entities have largely been resolved on a county-by-county basis. Only Pacific County has elected to establish the MRC as a subcommittee of an existing committee.

Future coastal MRC work is dependent on continued funding at or above the current level. MRCs are providing a vehicle for community visioning and consensus-building, supporting coastal resource-based communities, improving access to marine resources, filling science gaps, improving education, and preventing future resource degradation. MRCs also provide a direct connection between coastal residents and state policy and management related to ocean resources. WDFW is pleased to continue supporting the work of coastal counties and looks forward to working with citizens and local entities to continue building the Coastal MRC Program. In conclusion, Coastal MRCs provide a non-regulatory mechanism to discuss and develop solutions for issues facing coastal resources and communities, help promote healthy coastal communities through improved infrastructure and sustainable practices relating to marine resources, and complement and support ongoing efforts to improve scientific knowledge, public understanding, conservation and restoration, and management of marine resources.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For additional supporting materials, reports, documents and links to individual MRC websites mentioned in this report visit the Coastal MRC Program Website:

<http://wdfw.wa.gov/about/volunteer/mrc/>

For more information about the Northwest Straits Initiative, visit:

<http://www.nwstraits.org/>

For more information on Coastal Marine Spatial Planning, visit:

<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/msp/law.html>

