



CLALLAM COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

5 Year Strategic Plan, 2025-2029

INTRODUCTION

The Clallam County Marine Resources Committee (CCMRC) is a volunteer organization established by the Clallam County Board of Commissioners (BOCC) as an advisory committee ([Resolution 58-1999](#)) with a mission to “address local marine issues related to the Strait of Juan de Fuca, recommend remedial actions to local authorities, build local awareness of the issues and support for remedies...”.

The CCMRC is one of seven Marine Resources Committees supported by the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative authorized by the U.S. Congress in 1998 following the recommendations of a blue-ribbon committee created by U.S. Senator Patti Murray and U.S. Representative Jack Metcalf (Murray-Metcalf Commission). Our funding comes from federal and state grants administered by the [Northwest Straits Commission](#) (NWSC). In addition to collaborating with the NWSC, the [Northwest Straits Foundation](#), and other MRCs, CCMRC and its members also work closely with many local and regional partners, including Tribes. For detailed information and a full list of our valuable partners/collaborators, see [our website](#).

VISION STATEMENT

CCMRC’s vision is a healthy marine ecosystem for future generations.

MISSION STATEMENT AND GOALS

To achieve the vision by:

- 1.) Protecting marine ecosystems through monitoring and restoration.
- 2.) Using science to support decision making, to educate, and to advise the public and elected officials.
- 3.) Promoting environmental stewardship, engaging local residents in citizen science, and involving partner organizations.
- 4.) Implementing projects and activities that are collectively agreed upon by the CCMRC and championed by individual members.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND CURRENT ACTIVITIES

Monitoring to Deliver Measurable Science that Informs and Reduces Uncertainty:

- **Kelp monitoring:** CCMRC monitors floating kelp beds at three locations to provide valuable information on the annual spatial distribution of floating kelp communities in CCMRC will complete surveys during the dominant growing months, typically June-September. Data are provided to the Northwest Straits Commission and Department of Natural Resources.
- **Pigeon guillemot monitoring:** Using existing survey methods of the Salish Sea Guillemot Network protocol, the CCMRC conducts weekly pigeon guillemot breeding colony surveys annually during the summer months. The goals of this project are to monitor and improve understanding of nearshore health by monitoring pigeon guillemots as an indicator species and to promote community science contributions to regional research.
- **Forage fish monitoring:** In collaboration with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), CCMRC monitors forage fish spawning on a monthly basis at four beaches, and provides the samples to WDFW for analysis.
- **Olympia oysters:** In partnership with the Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe and WDFW, the CCMRC monitors Olympia oyster populations annually in Sequim Bay.
- **Pinto abalone surveys:** During the fall of 2024, in partnership with the Puget Sound Restoration Fund (PSRF) and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), the CCMRC began diver surveys in the eastern waters of Clallam County between Protection Island and Miller Peninsula. The objective was to determine if remnant Pinto Abalone populations are present, and to assess habitat suitability for potential future restoration efforts. During the 2025-2029 timeframe, these surveys will be expanded to the central Strait of Juan de Fuca (Strait) west of Port Angeles to increase our knowledge of abalone distribution and habitat suitability.

Restoration that Addresses Conservation Challenges:

- **Olympia oysters:** The goal of this project is to bolster recruitment and support self-sustaining populations of Olympia oysters. This could be augmented by providing additional substrate for settlement through habitat enhancement using blank

Pacific oyster shells and supplementing with hatchery-produced Olympia oyster seed.

- **Pinto abalone - possible future restoration project:** During 2025-2029, we will work collaboratively with PSRF and WDFW to assess the feasibility of extending the juvenile abalone out-planting restoration efforts currently underway in San Juan Islands to the waters of the Strait. It is hoped that out-planting would be initiated in the next five years if suitable restoration locations can be found and funding is available.

Education and Outreach to Engage Communities and Amplify Science:

- **Elwha stewardship:** The CCMRC provides a Sanikan and dog waste bags at the West Elwha Beach, with a focus on reducing human and dog waste entering the waterway. This includes routine surveys of people and dog use of the beach to understand trends over time.
- **HAZWOPER & oiled wildlife rescue training:** The goal of this project is to train local residents in Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response (HAZWOPER) and oiled wildlife response, to bolster the community's capacity to respond in the event of an oil spill.
- **Catch More Crab:** CCMRC members educate the public through the Northwest Straits Foundation's "Catch More Crab" program, encouraging crabbers to use techniques that prevent gear loss and resulting marine life mortality.
- **Derelict vessels & gear:** The CCMRC may participate in regional efforts to prevent and/or remove derelict fishing and boating gear, especially derelict vessels and crabbing gear, to reduce the threat posed to marine ecosystems by this debris.
- **Shore Friendly:** The CCMRC supports a statewide program by the Northwest Straits Foundation promoting sustainable shoreline management by reducing hard armoring like seawalls. The MRC participates by facilitating workshops for shoreline landowners about soft armoring options and the science of healthy shorelines.
- **Festivals / coasters:** The CCMRC continually engages in community outreach and education events. Some events return for many years in a row, while some are unique one-time opportunities to reach out to the community. Educational coasters featuring marine life and issues are distributed at these events and local venues, linking the public to more information.
- **Public presentations:** The CCMRC takes available opportunities to engage with the public through presentations on our work. This may include presentations to local affinity groups, students, the community at large, the BOCC, and other organizations or governments.
- **Interns:** The CCMRC aims to further education and career development of local students in marine science and conservation through offering internships as appropriate.

Advisory Work to Prepare our Community for Environmental Changes:

- **Elected official updates:** The CCMRC provides input to the BOCC and the Director of Community Development, prioritizing our current list of top concerns for the marine environment.
- **Planning:** Provide comments on local Comprehensive Plans, Climate Resiliency Plans, and Hazard Mitigation Plans.
- **Advisory:** The CCMRC advises on project proposals of concern to the CCMRC through its adopted advisory process.

Support Community Projects that are led by our Partners:

- **Sound Toxins (Feiro Marine Life Center, Washington Sea Grant):** “a monitoring program designed to provide early warning of harmful algal bloom events in order to minimize both human health risks and economic losses to Puget Sound fisheries”
- **Shellfish Biotoxin Sampling (Clallam County Environmental Health):** shellfish sampling for the Washington State Department of Health determines whether beaches must be closed for shellfish harvest during blooms of toxin-producing plankton.
- **Green crab molt search (Washington Sea Grant):** “Molt Search aims to support broader participation in early detection along inland Washington’s shorelines by teaching volunteers simple, standardized steps for searching and reporting on the presence (and absence!) of European green crab molts.”
- **EGC European Green Crab trapping (Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe, Washington Sea Grant):** MRC members participate in regional efforts to trap invasive European green crabs.
- **Revegetations and beach cleanups:** The CCMRC may assist our partners with these efforts incidentally in the coming years.

OPERATIONS

The CCMRC meets as a whole monthly to discuss project lead reports, upcoming events, NWSC updates, potential new issues and business, and speaker presentations. Regular meetings are advertised and the public is invited to attend. Every other year, the CCMRC reviews and updates its project plans and funding for the next biennium.

CCMRC staff are employees of Clallam County and administer grants and coordinate committee operations. CCMRC membership appointments follow representation policies found in authorizing documents and last four years, with no renewal limitations; open positions are advertised and approved by the BOCC. Our website lists current members and will soon include a document describing CCMRC roles and responsibilities.

The NWSC hosts a conference every year which offers a chance for CCMRC members to learn from and network with MRCs from the other counties and the NWSC [Science Advisory Committee](#) on field projects, outreach techniques, and more. This event fosters

collaborative stewardship of the marine and nearshore environment and is motivational, especially for newer CCMRC members.

Monitoring projects follow Quality Assurance Project Plans (QAPPs) approved by the Washington Department of Ecology. With the help of NWSC we keep up with the state of the science and invite experts in new technologies to educate us about those techniques. Recent presentations have included:

- Underwater robotic system (BlueROV)
- Environmental DNA (eDNA) studies
- Aquaculture technologies

MOVING TOWARD 2029

The CCMRC will use this plan to continue monitoring and restoration of the marine environment, education and outreach, and advisory work to prepare our community for environmental changes.

This plan was approved by consensus of the Marine Resources Committee at its regular meeting December 16th, 2024.