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Island County

Serving the communities of Camano & Whidbey Islands

August 2020 Natural Resources Newsletter

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Natural Resources

Newsletter

August 2020

Announcements

Welcome, Hannah!

We are so excited to share that Hannah Rae Liss is joining the DNR team! Hannah will be working with Natural Resources as a Watershed Planner. She brings a wealth of experience in critical areas planning, education, riparian and wetland restoration and assessment to our team. Hannah's professionalism, passion and upbeat attitude make her



the perfect fit for this position and a wonderful addition to our team.

COVID-19 Update

For COVID-19 resources and updates, please visit [Island County Public Health's COVID-19 webpage](#). We wish the best to all of you, and are thankful to be part of such a strong, resourceful community.

Programmatic Updates

Island Local Integrating Organization (ILIO)

The next ILIO Technical Committee meeting will be held Tuesday, September 8 from 1-3pm via WebEx.

The Washington State Department of Health recently updated the [area of harvestable shellfish beds](#) indicator (Shellfish Beds Vital Sign) and the [onsite sewage systems](#) Vital Sign indicator. The shellfish beds indicator has had an overall increase in the cumulative net area of harvestable shellfish beds, but stops short of the 2020 target. The onsite sewage systems indicator tracks and advances the proper use and care of septic systems in sensitive and high-risk areas of Puget Sound. The 2020 target for the rate of inventorying septic systems has nearly been met, but significant work remains to reach the 2020 target for inspection rates.

Be sure to check [ILIO's website](#) for upcoming meeting agendas and minutes.

Marine Resources Committee (MRC)

Welcome, Andi!

In July, Island MRC welcomed its newest member, Andi Kopit! Andi is passionate about all

things invertebrate, both aquatic and terrestrial and enjoys sharing her passion with the next generation through scientific outreach and education.



Bull kelp monitoring is in full swing! Our volunteers are surveying bull kelp beds around Whidbey and Camano Islands. For the first time, volunteers were able to document Pacific sand lance feeding in one of the bull kelp beds. Check out a video of these important forage fish, as well as videos of other marine life found in our local kelp beds on the MRC's [kelp monitoring webpage](#).

The next MRC meeting will be held Tuesday, September 1 via WebEx.

Be sure to check [MRC's website](#) for upcoming meeting agendas and minutes.

Salmon Recovery

The next Salmon Recovery Technical and Citizen Committee (SRTCC) meeting will be held Wednesday, September 16 from 1-3pm via WebEx.

The Island County lead entity is entering the season of process updates and reports after the recent completion of the 2020 Grant Round. This year's project list has been submitted to the Puget Sound Partnership (PSP) and the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) and awaits final approval in early September by the SRFB.

During late July in the Puget Sound, 2 dams were removed – Pilchuck (Snohomish) and Middle Fork Nooksack (Whatcom). This resulted in 53 miles of salmon and steelhead habitat opening up. The 16 miles behind the Nooksack dam alone will reconnect 20% of the historical habitat for North/Middle Fork spring Chinook and at least 45% of the historical Middle Fork habitat available to Nooksack River winter Steelhead. Read a Seattle Times article about it [here](#), and watch a Q13 Fox news report [here](#). You can also see what's going at the Pilchuck Dam live [here](#).

Be sure to check out the [Salmon Recovery website](#) for upcoming meeting agendas and minutes!



The Middle Fork Nooksack Dam during construction. (Photo: City of Bellingham)

Resources and Interesting Reads

Local News

The [Whidbey Camano Land Trust](#) has preserved a beautiful, diverse forest in Central Whidbey. This forest also protects shoreline and marine environments. Read about it [here!](#)

Funding Opportunities

The [Rose Foundation](#) has announced their Orca Fund Request for Proposals (RFP), which supports projects related to the protection of the endangered Southern Resident Orcas. Visit the [Orca Fund](#) page to learn more. Preproposals are due by Friday, August 14.

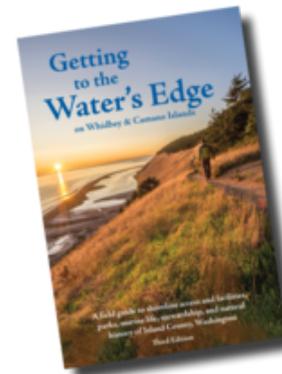
[National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration \(NOAA\)'s Climate Program Office](#) has a new [funding opportunity](#) open for adaptation science that includes competitive grant funding for coastal resilience. The program is seeking proposals focused on U.S. coastal communities planning for the future impacts of flooding in the context of climate variability and change and other stressors. Letters of intent are due by 2pm PDT on Monday, August 17.

The [Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)](#) announced the 2020 notice of funding availability under its Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) program, including funding for the new state infrastructure financing authority WIFIA (SWIFIA) program. With \$5 billion available for FY 2020, these funding programs accelerate investment in critical water infrastructure through innovative and flexible financing that can support diverse projects in both large and small communities. For more information, click [here](#). The deadline to submit a letter of intent is Thursday, October 15.

The [Federal Emergency Management Agency \(FEMA\)](#) posted the Fiscal Year 2020 (FY20) Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) [Notification of Funding Opportunities \(NOFOs\)](#) for the [Flood Mitigation Assistance \(FMA\)](#) grant program and the new [Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities \(BRIC\)](#) pre-disaster mitigation grant program. States and Tribes can apply, and local jurisdictions can be the sub-awardees. The application period opens on September 30, 2020. Tribes and States can submit applications in the [FEMA Go Portal](#) no later than 12pm PST on Friday, January 29, 2021. Several informational webinars will be hosted in August and September.

Learn

[Sound Water Stewards](#) has launched the third edition of [Getting to the Water's Edge](#). This field guide contains information about Island County beaches, access, stewardship, history, and more. We are excited to share the news of this updated local resource!



On Wednesday, October 7 from 9am-2pm, you can join Washington state Insurance Commissioner Mike Kreidler and his guests for [Climate Summit 2020](#). It is virtual, free, and open to the public. There will be presentations on the latest climate science, private sector best practices, and regulatory environments related to climate change. Register [here](#).

The [Washington State Department of Ecology](#) (Ecology) is developing a quantitative model to assess current and potential future risks of oil spills in Washington waters. It is hosting a webinar on Wednesday, September 16 from 1-3pm. There will be discussion about an important component of Ecology's model, the Vessel Movement Module. Register [here](#). This event is part of an ongoing series of discussions on model development. For more information, including previous webinars, visit [Ecology's risk modeling webpage](#).

Check out [Puget Sound Partnership's](#) annual report for policymakers. This collection includes a dozen important science stories addressing key policy issues facing Puget Sound recovery. The 2020 edition focuses on the impact of climate change on the Salish Sea and includes a special section on the effect of global warming on infectious diseases in the ecosystem. See the report [here!](#)

"Congress passed sweeping legislation allocating \$900 million a year for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), and an additional \$9.5 billion over five years to address an urgent backlog of maintenance projects at the nation's parks and other public lands." Read the full story [here](#).

[NOAA Fisheries](#) announced a recommendation for 31 new and ongoing coastal and marine habitat restoration projects in 15 states and territories to receive nearly \$13 million in FY2020 [Community-based Restoration Program \(CRP\) funding](#). This includes projects in Washington! In collaboration with NOAA, selected partners will use these funds to implement habitat restoration actions that will restore coastal ecosystems and contribute to the recovery, conservation, and resilience of protected species such as salmon and coral. At this point in the selection process, the application approval and obligation of funds is not final.

Tools

Check out the [Salish Sea Model](#) from [Pacific Northwest National Laboratory](#). It's a predictive coastal ocean model for estuarine research, restoration planning, water-quality management, and climate change response assessment.

Speaking of sea level rise, check out [this compilation of resources and tools](#) to increase Washington's capacity to prepare for natural hazards that threaten our coasts. It results from the collaboration of many agencies and organizations.

Act!

Volunteer to help maintain coastal habitat in Deception Pass State Park! Summer work parties are happening at Bowman Bay on August 21, and Cornet Bay August 28. All events are Fridays from 10am-1pm. Space is limited due to COVID-19. RSVP at www.skagitfisheries.org, email sfeg@skagitfisheries.org, or call 360-336-0172.



Volunteers pull weeds at Cornet Bay.

Discover Mukilteo Lighthouse Park! [The Washington State University \(WSU\) Beach Watchers](#) in Snohomish County are offering a free virtual reality scavenger hunt app until Labor Day. Learn how to participate [here](#).

The [Salmon Recovery Funding Board](#) is accepting written comment on a [policy proposal](#) to guide future targeted investments. Written comments will be accepted until 5pm on Monday, August 17. The board will consider public comments before making a final policy decision at its Wednesday, September 16 board meeting. To submit a comment or request information, please email policychanges@rco.wa.gov.



Bowman Bay (Mount Baker Experience Magazine Website)

Upcoming Events

Friday, August 21	Bowman Bay Work Party from 10am-1pm. Register here .
Friday, August 28	Cornet Bay Work Party from 10am-1pm. Register here .
Tuesday, September 1	The MRC will meet via WebEx from 3-5pm.

Tuesday, September 8	The ILIO will meet via WebEx from 1-3pm.
Wednesday, September 16	Ecology is hosting a webinar about the Vessel Movement Module from 1-3pm. Register here .
Wednesday, September 16	SRTCC will meet via WebEx from 1-3pm.
Wednesday, October 7	Climate Summit 2020 will be held from 9am-2pm. Register here .

Thank you for your interest in [Island County Natural Resources](#).

For more information, contact Ann Prusha: a.prusha@islandcountywa.gov or 360-678-2347.

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