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Island County

Serving the communities of Camano & Whidbey Islands

October 2020 Natural Resources Newsletter

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Natural Resources Newsletter

October 2020

Announcements

[Shore Friendly Mini-Grant Program Launches!](#)

We are excited to announce the launch of our Shore Friendly Mini-Grant Program. Shoreline landowners in Island County are invited to apply for funding to enhance nearshore habitat and prevent the need for hard shoreline armor. Mini-grant amounts will range from \$500-\$5,000 and can be used towards bulkhead removal, soft shore protection, native vegetation, drainage management, and house or septic relocation.

Landowners may apply for technical assistance, design and permitting services, or project implementation. To learn more about the program and eligible activities, click [here](#).



PROTECTING PUGET SOUND STARTS AT HOME



Coming soon: Human Wellbeing Vital Sign Survey

The [Island Local Integrating Organization](#) (ILIO) and [Oregon State University](#) have collaborated to create a human wellbeing survey for Island County residents. This survey will help prioritize efforts for ecosystem protection and recovery for years to come. It will be sent out later this month.

Spartina Removal Event

Want to get in the mud and remove some invasive grass? You can have your chance on Wednesday and Thursday, October 14 and 15 from 8am-12pm. Contact Ann Prusha with Island County Natural Resources at a.prusha@islandcountywa.gov or 360-678-2347 for details.

Programmatic Updates

Island Local Integrating Organization

The next ILIO Technical Committee meeting will be held Tuesday, November 10 from 1-3pm via Zoom.

The [Stormwater Strategic Initiative Advisory Team](#) (SIAT) will be hosting an unpermitted jurisdiction workshop on Monday, October 19 to share ideas about improving policies, processes, and actions that could benefit water quality throughout the Sound and also improve resilience and economic planning while protecting human health. Please contact [Lori Clark](#) for details.

There is an opportunity to review the Toxics in Fish (TIF) Implementation Strategies (IS) products (narrative, results chains, etc.) until Friday, October 16. Feedback will be used by the TIF Core Team to adjust and improve IS content based on external input. Thank you to those who participated in the development and review of these products. Strategies for Benthic Index of Biotic Integrity (B-IBI) is expected for public release by the end of 2020. [Visit here for the public review draft, executive summary, and public comment form.](#)

The [Habitat Strategic Implementation Lead](#) (SIL) hosted a webinar on High-Resolution Change Detection (NTA 2016-0141). The link to recorded webinar and FAQs will be added to the [SIL blog](#).

“Reflections on the FFY2020 HSI Shared Investment Pilot” will be shared soon.

The [Northwest Straits Foundation](#) just released the first in a series of Shore Friendly videos. This one covers coastal beaches and bluffs, and features coastal geologist Hugh Shipman! Check it out [here](#), and if you feel inclined to share and/or comment, that will help spread the word.

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

• PCBs are released from multiple sources into Puget Sound

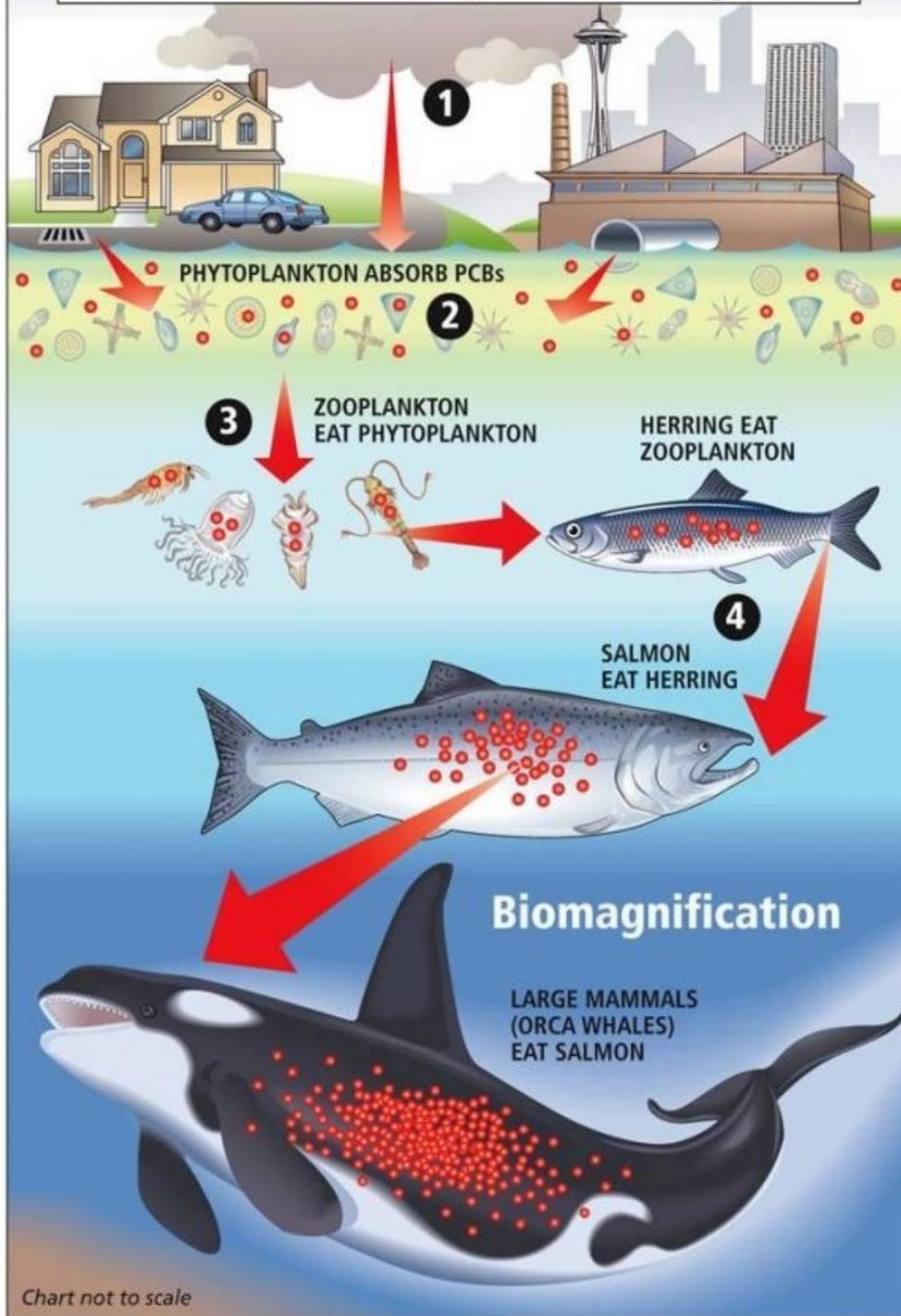


Chart not to scale

Marine Resources Committee (MRC)

The next MRC meeting will be held Tuesday, November 3 from 3-5pm via Zoom.

Want to hear about nearshore restoration and monitoring efforts along our shorelines in Island County? Listen in on [this podcast](#) from the Northwest Fish Passage! MRC and Shore Friendly Coordinator Anna Toledo talks about the work of the MRC, including bull kelp and forage fish monitoring, as well as outreach and restoration work.

Throughout the month of October, join the [MRC](#), [Whidbey Island Conservation District](#), [Northwest Straits Foundation](#), [Orca Network](#), and other partners in recognizing [Orca Recovery Day](#). There are several activities you can participate in!

- [EcoChallenge](#): Join the “[Island County MRC and Friends!](#)” EcoChallenge team or create your own team and log actions that you take this month to support orca recovery. Report your actions to earn points and win prizes!
- [Orca Forum](#), Wednesday, October 14, 5:30-7pm: Join this virtual workshop to learn from local experts about orca recovery research taking place in Puget Sound.
- [Orca Trivia Night](#), Thursday, October 15, 7pm: Challenge your friends (or team up with them!) in this fun evening full of questions about orca, salmon, and marine habitat.
- [Orca-Inspired Art Contest](#): Young and old alike are invited to show their artistic creativity to depict orca recovery or the human connection with orcas. Entries are due Saturday, October 31.

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

Salmon Recovery

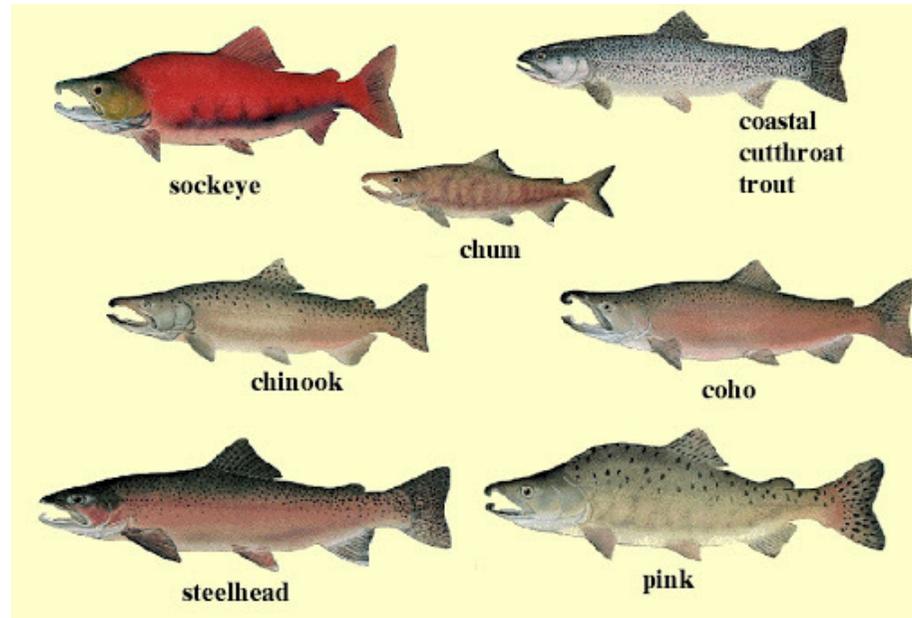
The next Salmon Recovery Technical and Citizen Committee (SRTCC) meeting will be held Wednesday, October 21 from 1-3pm via Zoom.

The 4 projects proposed for [Salmon Recovery Funding Board](#) (SRFB) and [Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration](#) (PSAR) funding this past grant round were approved by the SRFB. The final design and permitting for the Hoypus Point Armor Removal project will go under contract immediately, as well as the feasibility and design for the Polnell Point Armor Removal project. Congratulations to the [Northwest Straits Foundation](#) for proposing two outstanding armor removal projects. Pending next year's state budget and the allocation for PSAR funds, the 2 remaining projects will move forward in July 2021. Those projects are: 1) an acquisition in Port Susan and 2) a contribution to the large Florence

Island Protection Project, which we are assisting the [Stillaguamish Lead Entity](#) with. Congratulations to the [Whidbey Camano Land Trust](#) (WCLT) and the [Stillaguamish Tribes](#) for successful grant applications.

WCLT recently announced the final closing on the Elger Bay property on Camano Island. This was a 2019 Salmon Recovery funded project (PSAR funds) that leveraged other grant dollars and donations. Apparently, there was a last minute donation by a private citizen and long time supporter of salmon recovery and Camano parks. This helped seal the deal when there was a small hiccup with other expected funding that failed to materialize. Thank you (and you know who you are...)! We are ever so grateful for your generosity.

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



Oncorhynchus spp. in the Pacific Northwest. Photo: <http://www.bluefish.org/chasing.htm>

Resources, Community Events, and Interesting Reads

Local News

Whidbey News-Times reported on a possible ‘seven-armed octopus’ found on the beach at Ebey’s Landing. Scientists from across the nation agreed it is most likely a specimen of *Haliphron atlanticus*. Read the full article [here](#).

Funding Opportunities

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 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 [Pacific Marine and Estuarine Fish Habitat Partnership](#) (PMEP) requests proposals for projects that will advance fish habitat conservation and restoration along the West Coast. PMEP is seeking project proposals that restore nursery habitats for PMEP focal species within smaller estuarine systems (with an emphasis on habitat connectivity) or proposals that increase our understanding of fish habitats in estuarine and nearshore waters. Proposals are due by Friday, October 30. Learn how to apply [here!](#)

The [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration \(NOAA\) Marine Debris Program](#) has announced its 2021 Marine Debris Research notice of funding opportunity. NOAA will fund research projects that investigate and identify the critical input pathways for marine debris introduction into the coastal zone. The Letter of Intent is due Thursday, November 5. For more information, please visit [Grants.gov](#) and the [NOAA Marine Debris Program website](#).



Volunteers remove a derelict vessel. Photo: American Littoral Society

Learn

This webinar, [Defending Drayton Harbor: Managing the recent invasion of European Green Crabs collaboratively](#), was hosted by [Whatcom Watershed Information Network](#) and [Whatcom Marine Resources Committee](#). It's a wonderful lineup of speakers who give an update on the history, biology, and present circumstances of European Green Crab in Drayton Harbor, WA.

Check out this website, [Coastal News Today](#). It covers coastal issues nationally, and it hosts several podcasts via the [American Shoreline Podcast Network](#).

Read this [fascinating article](#) about using seal skulls to learn about the history of the food web!



Harbor seals, Lopez Island, WA. Photo: Bethany Weeks (CC BY-NC 2.0) <https://flic.kr/p/6Mnq5k>

Tools

Check out this [super cool tool](#) from the [Nisqually River Education Project](#)! It's geared towards school aged children, who will learn about watersheds, the importance of water quality, water quality parameters, and the environmental and human factors that influence water quality.

Act!

[Skagit MRC](#) is hosting [Fidalgo Bay Day 2020 Scavenger Hunt!](#) You can participate until Saturday, October 31.

The [Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife](#) (WDFW) is seeking public comments on draft rules for commercial whale watching designed to reduce vessel impacts on Southern Resident killer whales. The new rules, expected to go into effect in 2021, are intended to reduce impacts of vessel noise and disturbance on Southern Resident killer whales so that they can effectively find food, rest, and socialize. [Visit here](#) to learn how to submit a comment.

The [Washington State Department of Ecology](#) (Ecology) is updating the [North Central Puget Sound Geographic Response Plan \(NCPS-GRP\)](#). An important part of the update

process is collecting comments from the people who live, work, and play in this GRP area. You can submit comments through their [online comment form](#).

[Ecology](#) has opened a public comment period for its proposed amendments to Chapter 173-185 WAC, Oil Movement by Rail and Pipeline Notification. Learn more [here](#).



Upcoming Events

Wednesday, October 14	Island County Natural Resources is hosting a <i>Spartina</i> removal event from 8am-12pm. Contact Ann Prusha for more details.
Wednesday, October 14	Participate in the Orca Recovery Day Orca Forum from 5:30-7pm.
Wednesday & Thursday, October 14 & 15	The virtual 2020 Salish Sea Shared Waters Forum takes place. Register here .
Thursday, October 15	Island County Natural Resources is hosting a <i>Spartina</i> removal event from 8am-12pm. Contact Ann Prusha for more details.

Thursday, October 15	Participate in the Orca Recovery Day Orca Trivia Night at 7pm.
Wednesday, October 21	SRTCC will meet via Zoom from 1-3pm.
Saturday, October 31	Last day to participate in the Fidalgo Bay Day 2020 Scavenger Hunt .
Saturday, October 31	Last day to submit entries for the Orca-Inspired Art Contest .
Tuesday, November 3	The MRC will meet via Zoom from 3-5pm.
Tuesday, November 10	The ILIO will meet via Zoom from 1-3pm.

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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