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Natural Resources Newsletter

April 2021

Announcements

[Meet the Island County Natural Resources Team!](#)

Please join Island County staff in discussing the wide range of services provided by your local natural resources team! From soil to stream to shoreline, factors such as noxious weeds, septic systems, and bulkheads can play a significant role in watershed health. During this 90 minute interactive webinar, panelists will discuss how Island County Public Health is monitoring water quality and taking action to protect you from harmful pollutants in the local drinking water, shellfish beds, and beloved beaches! This event will take place virtually on Thursday, April 15 from 11am to 12:30pm. Please visit [this link](#) for free registration.

ISLAND COUNTY IS CELEBRATING EARTH MONTH!



Please join us as we discuss the many ways your local government is working to keep the environment healthy and safe for everyone. Mini-presentations will be followed by a Q&A with our panelists below.

When: April 15th from 11:00am-12:30pm

The event will be held virtually using Zoom. The webinar link and optional pre-registration is available below and on the Island County Natural Resources webpage.



Ann Prusha, Environmental Health Specialist- Learn how to use the Washington State Department of Health's Shellfish Safety Map. She will also address some of the frequently asked questions about recreational shellfish harvesting.

Anna Toledo, Watershed Planner- Learn how you can receive information and technical assistance for Shore Friendly alternatives to hard armoring that provide both the use and enjoyment of shoreline property while also protecting the shoreline habitats and species we love. Anna will also share about volunteer work being done through the Marine Resources Committee to protect and restore our local marine resources.



Seth Luginbill, Noxious Weed Program Coordinator- Learn how invasive species affect a wide array of habitats but can be particularly detrimental when found in aquatic and marine environments. We will discuss prevalent invasive aquatic/marine species here in Island County, how to ID these species, and best management practices for controlling them.

Matt Colston & Jenny Schofield, Surface Water Quality Monitoring Team- Learn about Island County's Surface Water Quality Monitoring Program and pollution identification and correction efforts. We will be joined by Nolan Simmons from our On-Site Septic Program to discuss how our every day actions affect our waterways.



Register Here: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_RqbrgfaGSFq9QGeGivL_6w

Programmatic Updates

[Island Local Integrating Organization \(ILIO\)](#)

The next ILIO Technical Committee meeting will be held Tuesday, April 13 from 1-3pm via Zoom.

Check out the [Human Wellbeing explorer map](#) created by [Oregon State University](#) to visualize survey responses about human well-being in the Puget Sound.



2021 VIRTUAL PUGET SOUND DAYS ON THE HILL: Since we can't convene in person, this year's Puget Sound Days on the Hill will be a series of virtual events with the Washington congressional delegation, federal officials, and special guests. [Puget Sound Partnership](#) (PSP) and the [Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission](#) (NWIFC) are hosting these events, which are currently scheduled on Fridays from 1-2:30pm PDT, April 23-May 21. Additional notes will be provided prior to each session. Puget Sound restoration and protection, salmon recovery efforts, climate change adaptation and mitigation, infrastructure, and other topics will be discussed. Check [here](#) for the latest information.

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

Marine Resources Committee (MRC)

The next MRC meeting will be held Tuesday, May 4 from 3-5pm via Zoom.

Check out the "[Make a Difference](#)" column in the *Whidbey Weekly*, written by MRC's own Barbara Bennett! You can read it on page 9.

The MRC and [Sound Water Stewards](#) hosted a training on utilizing the [MyCoast app](#), a cell phone application to track and report beach change and nearshore hazards to enhance awareness among decision-makers and stakeholders. Check out the recorded training [here](#).

Coming soon...supported by the MRC and other local orgs, citizen scientists recently wrapped up a 10-year study about the distribution of eelgrass beds in Island County. A visually striking Storymap highlighting their work, and the importance of eelgrass beds, will be available in the near future.

MRC's Forage Fish monitoring teams are getting back out on the beach, **and the program is looking for more volunteers!** Monitoring for forage fish eggs provides important data that contributes to the health of marine life. If volunteering to be a part of this citizen science effort is something that piques your interest, please contact with Ann Prusha at a.prusha@islandcountywa.gov or 360-678-2347.



Volunteers use a "blue bowl" to separate forage fish eggs from beach substrate.

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

Salmon Recovery

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

SRTCC is pleased to announce that Barbara Brock (Co-Chair), Tom Vos, and John Lovie will be serving another term on SRTCC! They bring a wealth of knowledge, experience, and perspective. Thank you for your continued service.

Final project scoring for the two projects moving forward in the ranking process, Hoypus Point Shoreline Restoration and Polnell Armor Removal, will take place in May.

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

Resources and Interesting Reads

Funding Opportunities

The [Environmental Protection Agency's \(EPA\) Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving \(EJCPS\) Cooperative Agreement Program](#) and [Environmental Justice Small Grants \(EJSG\) Program](#) award grants that support community-driven projects designed to engage, educate, and empower communities to better understand local environmental and public health issues and develop strategies for addressing those issues, building consensus in the community, and setting community priorities. To learn more about pre-application assistance calls and how to apply for funding, follow the grant links above. Proposals are due by Friday, May 7.

[RADx-UP Coordination and Data Collection Center](#) is offering opportunities for mini-grants to help with COVID-19 testing initiatives. Learn more [here](#). Applications are due by Friday, April 16th.

The Monitoring to Accelerate Recovery Funding Opportunity, from the [Puget Sound Ecosystem Monitoring Program](#) (PSEMP), is a funding opportunity for collaborative projects as a mechanism by which the PSEMP and [Vital Signs](#) programs address priority monitoring information needs to inform adaptive management and accelerate recovery of Puget Sound. More information will be available on [PSEMP's website](#). Visit [here](#) for a presentation about this opportunity.

Learn

Registration is now open [Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office's \(RCO\) Salmon Recovery Conference](#). The theme is *Building a Movement*, and it takes place Wednesday-Friday, April 28-30. Register [here](#).



A Chinook salmon pictured in Oregon's McKenzie River. Morgan Bond (click image for source page)

The San Juan MRC and Salish Sea Institute hosted a webinar on the impacts of jet noise in the region. See the recording [here](#).

The *Environmental Law Reporter* graciously arranged to make [this article by Charles Lee](#) publicly available free-of-charge. The article explains environmental justice and how to push these concepts forward.

Nearly 30% of Puget Sound's shoreline has some sort of armoring meant to protect beaches from erosion. However, many of these structures are ineffective and destroy critical habitat for sea life, including salmon. Learn more [here](#).



An example of shoreline armoring. Photo: Jim Johannessen/Coastal Geologic Services

Act!

[Island County](#) and the [Washington State Department of Ecology](#) (Ecology) are accepting comments on a periodic review of Island County's Shoreline Master Plan (SMP) under RCW 90.58.080(4). Public comments will be accepted until Sunday, April 25. A joint local/state public hearing is set for Monday, April 12 at 2:00pm virtually via Starleaf (click [here](#)). The meeting ID is 428 487 0043. You can send comments to Island County planning staff at CompPlan@islandcountywa.gov. Comments sent to the County will be forwarded to Ecology. Proposed amendments to the Island County SMP are available for review [here](#).

During the 2021 Legislative Session, [PSP](#) is offering multiple opportunities to help you stay informed about legislative activities that affect Puget Sound protection and recovery efforts. Visit [PSP's website](#) for Legislative Updates, the Legislative Calendar, and instructions for attending Legislative Information Call-In meetings with Jeff Parsons, Legislative Policy Director. The Call-In meetings take place Fridays from 11:30am to no later than 12:30pm, and will continue until May 7. You can also sign up to receive email updates [here](#).

Event Rundown

Monday, April 12	A joint local/state public hearing will be held via Starleaf (click here) at 2pm regarding Island County's SMP update. The meeting ID is 428 487 0043.
Tuesday, April 13	The ILIO Technical Committee will meet via Zoom from 1-3pm.
Thursday, April 15	At 11am, Island County Natural Resources is hosting a 90-minute interactive webinar during which panelists will discuss the wide range of services provided by your local natural resources team. Register here .
Tuesday, April 20	The Marine Social Science Network: Promoting understanding of people's relationship with the sea webinar will be held at 9am PDT.
Tuesday, April 20	Washington State University Extension is hosting a virtual seminar on Green Storm Water practices, featuring the bioretention area at the new Island County Camano Annex facility. Registration information is available here .
Wednesday, April 21	SRTCC will meet via Zoom from 1-3pm.
Wednesday, April 28- Friday, April 30	RCO's Salmon Recovery Conference takes place. Register here .
Tuesday, May 4	The Island County MRC will meet via Zoom from 3-5pm.

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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