



Northwest Straits Initiative Five-Year Strategic Plan 2019-2024

Local people. Local solutions.

Mission: To protect and restore the marine waters, habitats and species of the Northwest Straits region to achieve ecosystem health and sustainable resource use.

Vision: We envision a thriving, resilient, and healthy Salish sea, where individuals are engaged in the health of their local ecosystems.

The Northwest Straits (NWS) Initiative carried out a strategic planning process over a one-year period. The plan is made up of insights from Marine Resources Committees (MRCs), NWS Initiative boards, staff, and partners. Six themes were identified. Each theme is supported by goals and objectives that guide us toward desired results. The objectives are broad to accommodate the grass-roots nature of the NWS Initiative. An accompanying operations plan provides details on the outcomes we aim to achieve.

This plan serves as a framework for the creation of MRC, NWS Commission, and NWS Foundation programs, projects and work plans.

Theme: Stewardship

Goal
Forge new paths to advance Northwest Straits recovery and complement the work of regional planning efforts.

- Objectives**
- Contribute to nearshore and marine habitat and species protection and restoration projects.
 - Encourage communities within the Northwest Straits and Salish Sea to be stewards in their public and private activities.
 - Protect and improve water quality.
 - Exhort local decision makers to act on emerging and urgent issues related to the health of the region's marine waters and habitat.
 - Review, anticipate, and comment promptly on local, and when appropriate, state policy development and revisions as they relate to nearshore and marine protection.
 - Provide learning opportunities to the public in partnership with subject matter experts.

Result
The Initiative inspires action.



Theme: Long-Term Stable Funding

Goal
Provide organizational stability that allows the Initiative to focus more on advancing its mission.

- Objectives**
- Pursue and secure stable funding that supports Initiative goals without compromising the organizational mission.
 - Obtain sustained funding for the Commission in a federal/state/local agency budget.
 - Leverage Commission funding through the Foundation to supplement Initiative funding sources.
 - Increase funding support for MRCs through counties.

Result
The Initiative completes and documents more projects to improve the health and resiliency of the Northwest Straits. More locals are actively engaged in stewardship activities. People are connected and invested to the ecosystem in which they live.



Theme: Structural support to MRCs

Goal
The NWS Initiative strengthens MRC capacity and presence within counties and across the Northwest Straits region and ensures the NWS are protected and restored.

- Objectives**
- Obtain one full-time equivalent staff for each MRC.
 - Add one full-time MRC Liaison to NWS Commission staff.
 - Assist MRCs during project development and with long-term, large-project planning.
 - Sponsor interns at the MRC level to support projects.
 - Emphasize work with county councils and commissions to assure MRCs are recognized as a valuable resource.
 - Support training and community member involvement as project volunteers, build an army of community scientists.
 - Foster strong communications among MRCs for cross-pollination of ideas and resources.

Result
The Initiative achieves conservation gains and impacts at the local level.

Theme: Engagement and Partnerships

Goal
Represent a broad range of interests in the Northwest Straits.

- Objectives**
- Continue to strengthen partnerships with tribes by identifying shared interests and priorities.
 - Develop general tools for outreach that resonate with communities throughout the Northwest Straits and Salish Sea.
 - Engage local, state, and federal elected officials and decision makers.
 - Engage partners that are representative of regional communities to foster collective action, including educational institutions and transboundary partners.

Result
The Initiative serves everyone who inhabits the Northwest Straits.



Theme: Measuring progress

Goal
Quantify Initiative progress to support communications.

- Objectives**
- Create and carry out a project assessment program that applies to every project, every time.
 - Document the Initiative's influence on and related changes to local and regional policy.
 - Document funding that is leveraged by volunteer activities.

Result
The Initiative measures what matters to provide clarity to communities.

Theme: Messaging

Goal
Clearly distinguish the Initiative from the work of other organizations.

- Objectives**
- Develop clear Initiative-wide messages that promote the vision of the Initiative and articulate the Initiative's role and progress within the larger recovery system.
 - Carry out Initiative communications.
 - Maintain internal communication to assure streamlined and cohesive messaging.

Result
The Initiative is recognized for its unique contributions to Northwest Straits recovery and sought by other organizations for support and advice within its areas of expertise.

