

ISLAND COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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Minutes

Prepared by Kelly Zupich

April 2, 2024

HYBRID MEETING

PRESENT: Barbara Bennett, Chair, Jill Lipoti, Vice Chair, Scott Chase, Paul Ben McElwain, Greg Easton, Kirk Larsen, Patrick Havel, Kelly Webb, Kes Tautvydas, Ken Collins, Melanie Bacon, Ex officio, Jennifer Schmitz, Ex-officio, Sarah Bergquist, Ex-officio, Kelly Zupich, MRC staff

ABSENT: Note if notified or un-notified – Andi Kopit, notified

VISITORS: Clea Barenburg, SRTCC, James Watson, WICD,

CALL TO ORDER: Jill called the meeting to order at 4:00pm. **INTRODUCTIONS:** Introductions were made. **QUORUM:** A quorum was declared. **AGENDA:** The agenda was approved. **MINUTES:** March 5, 2024, minutes approved

TRIBAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

We acknowledge the lands we're on today are the ancestral and current homelands of Indigenous Nations who have stewarded them since time immemorial. We respect their sovereignty, support their Treaty rights, their right to self-determination, and we honor their sacred spiritual connection with the land and water. These Indigenous Nations include the Jamestown S'Klallam, Lower Elwha Klallam, Lummi, Makah, Nooksack, Port Gamble S'Klallam, Samish, Stillaguamish, Swinomish, and Tulalip Tribes.

CORRESPONDENCE: No Correspondence

DNR Kelp & Eelgrass Plan: Max Showalter (see Power Point Presentation at end of minutes)

- Goals of the statewide kelp & eelgrass plan.
 - Protect and recover at least 10,000 acres of priority native kelp & eelgrass habitat by 2040.
 - Identify and mitigate stressors in priority habitats.
 - Monitor distribution and trends in priority habitats.
- High value areas
 - Mapped areas of shared ecological, economic, and cultural value.
 - Identified gaps in knowledge and need for deeper local context.

FORAGE FISH PROJECT UPDATE:

- Ideas for expanding this project:
 - See about setting volunteers up to do initial review of samples with microscopes.
 - Add additional monitoring activities while volunteers are already on the beach.

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- Could we modify our protocols to be flexible for monitoring for presence or absence to get protections on more beaches.

NWSC REPRESENTATIVE UPDATES:

- The Science Advisory Committee is planning on launching some training sessions on social science. These sessions will likely be held in the fall.
- San Juan MRC is hosting a derelict vessel turn in event.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN/SHORLINE MASTER PROGRAM UPDATES:

- Upcoming Commissioner meetings will cover the Natural Resources Element of the Comp Plan.
- The Comp Plan subcommittee will be meeting soon to check in.
- Barbara would like our MRC to consider developing a proposal to include a Marine Character Element within the Comp Plan.
- Our MRC would like to see how we can make sure our Comp Plan comments to be seen by the Commissioners and the public.

TRIBAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

- We will vote at our next meeting to decide if we want to truncate our tribal acknowledgment. The proposal is to not include specific Nations to make sure we are being inclusive and not forgetting anyone.

Meeting Adjourned 6:00 pm

STATE KELP FOREST AND EELGRASS MEADOW HEALTH AND CONSERVATION PLAN

April MRC Meetings



DNR KELP AND EELGRASS PRIORITIZATION PLAN

GOALS OF THE STATEWIDE KELP AND EELGRASS PLAN:

1

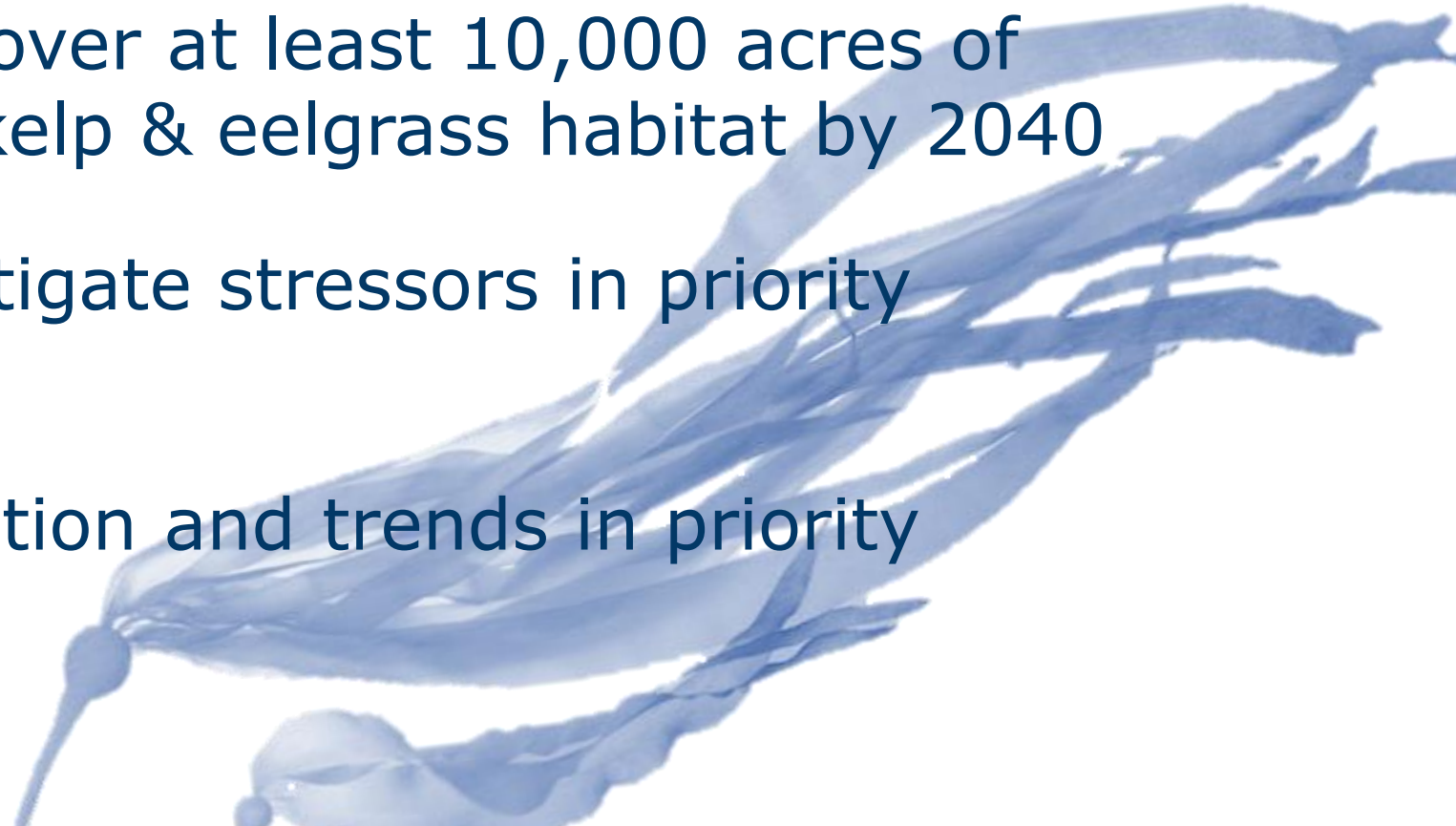
Protect and recover at least 10,000 acres of priority native kelp & eelgrass habitat by 2040

2

Identify and mitigate stressors in priority habitats

3

Monitor distribution and trends in priority habitats



DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

- Staff-to-staff Tribal engagement
- Convened expert working group of Tribes, academia, government, non-profits
- Held public workshops
- Early Tribal review



KELP AND EELGRASS ENGAGEMENT PLAN (2SSB 5619)

RCW 79.135.440

Prepared by
Washington State Department of Natural Resources
Office of the Commissioner of Public Lands, Hilary Franz
December 1, 2022



FRAMEWORK OUTLINE

1. **Why** protect kelp and eelgrass?
2. **What** habitats can we best protect or recover?
3. **How** will we protect or recover habitats?



PRIORITIZATION FRAMEWORK

STEP 1: STATEWIDE HIGH VALUE AREA IDENTIFICATION



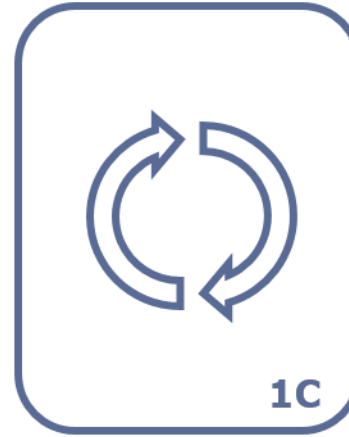
1A

SHARED VALUES



1B

HIGH VALUE AREAS

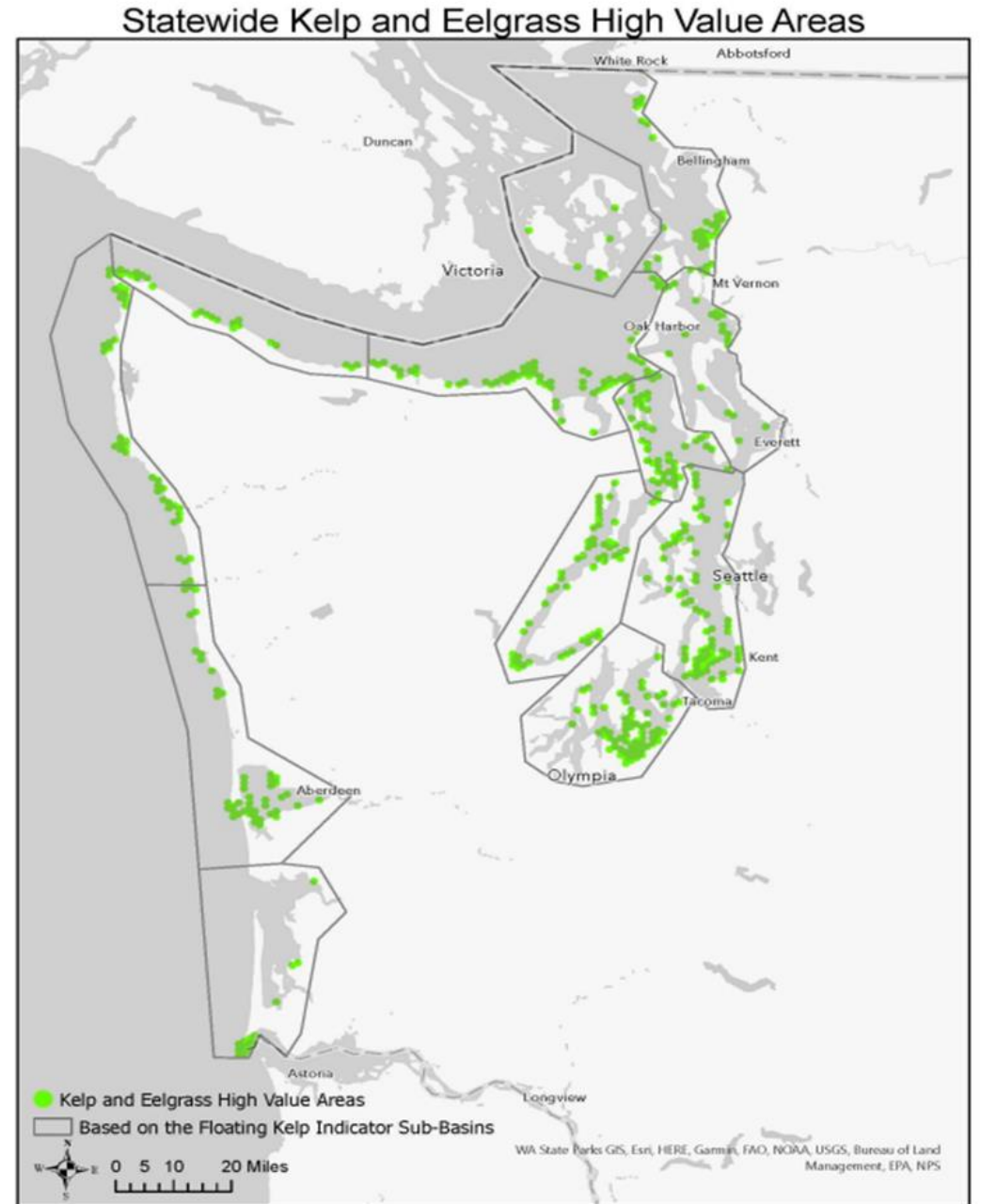


1C

REVISION

HIGH VALUE AREAS

- Mapped areas of shared ecological, economic, and cultural value
- Identified gaps in knowledge and need for deeper local context



PRIORITIZATION FRAMEWORK

STEP 1: STATEWIDE HIGH VALUE AREA IDENTIFICATION



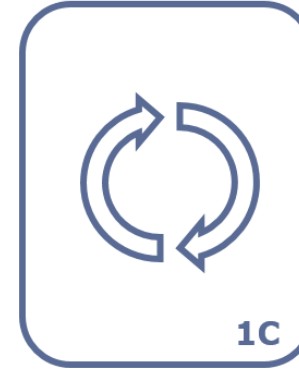
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SHARED VALUES



1B

HIGH VALUE AREAS



1C

REVISION

STEP 2: SUB-BASIN SCALE PRIORITY AREA IDENTIFICATION



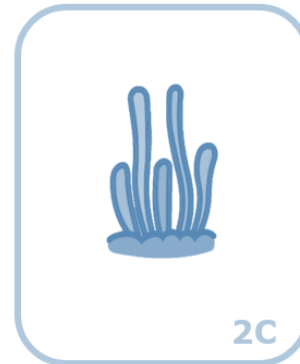
2A

LOCAL DATA



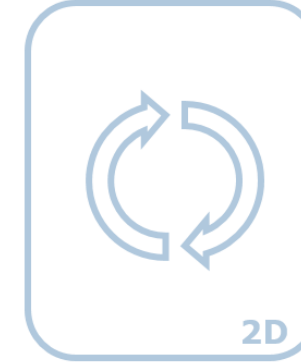
2B

SHARED ACTIONS



2C

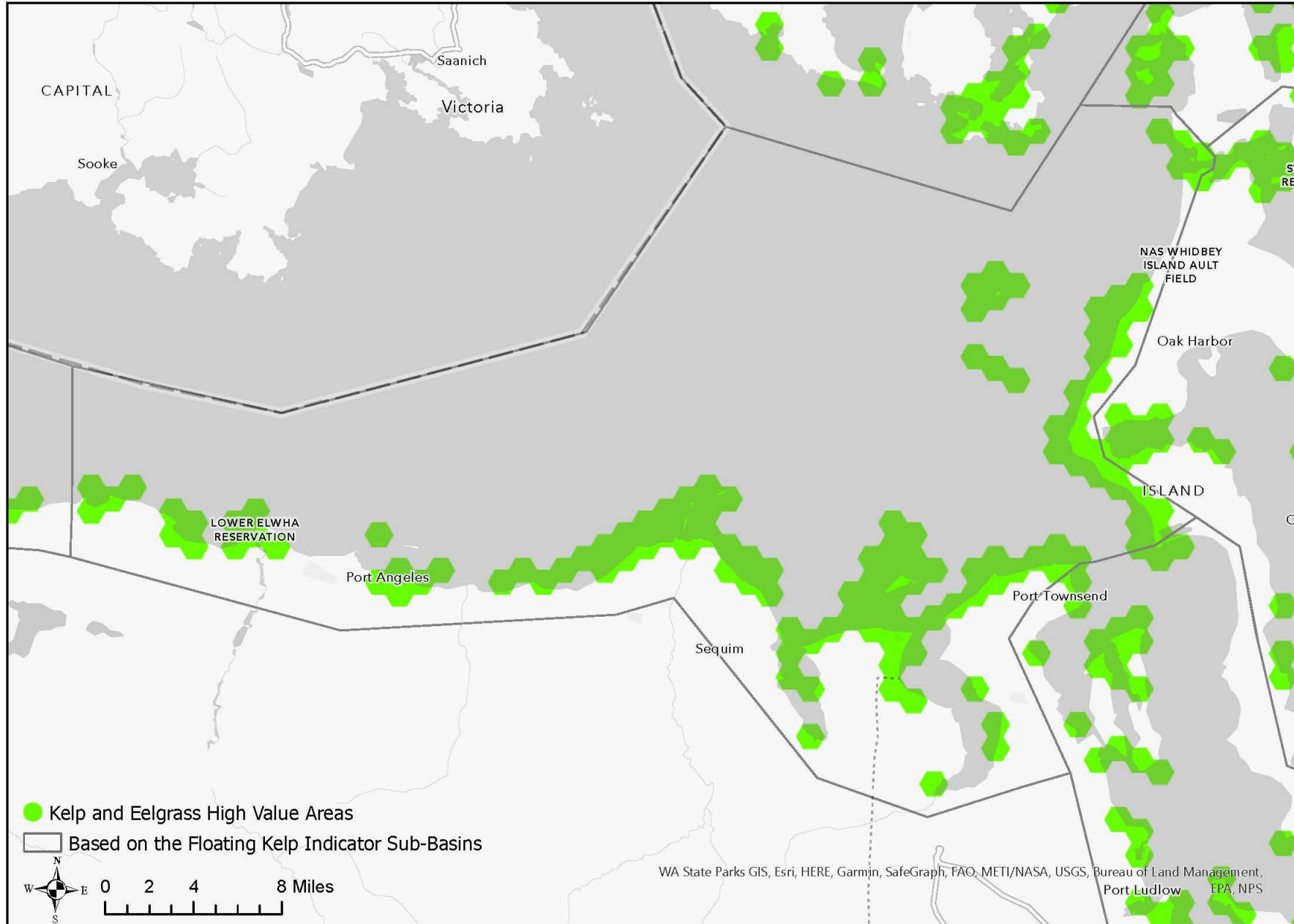
PRIORITY AREAS



2D

REPEAT

Eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca High Value Areas



IMPLEMENTATION GOALS

1. Support ongoing efforts by DNR and partners, particularly in High Value Areas
2. Identify ways to support new efforts in High Value Areas
3. Identify at least 10,000 acres of DNR managed lands for DNR-lead conservation and recovery actions; and
4. Proactively identify and leverage opportunities for conservation and recovery as they arise.



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Kelp Monitoring



Kelp beds are highly productive nearshore habitats that support commercial and sport fish, invertebrates, marine mammals and marine birds. Many factors, both natural and anthropogenic, affect the extent and composition of kelp beds. For example, elevated water temperature and intense sea urchin grazing can decimate kelp beds. El Nino events stress kelp by producing several winter storms and reducing upwelling events, which normally replenish the nutrients in the water column. Human influences on kelp beds include sewage and other runoff that decrease water quality and reduce light in the water column. Human activity can also lead to changes in substrate size, which can either increase or decrease available kelp habitat. Kelp plants can be physically damaged by boat propellers and fishing gear. Commercial harvest is not a significant factor of concern in Washington State due to a law prohibiting this practice.



The Nearshore Habitat Program surveys and monitors kelp in Puget Sound and along the open coast. The Nearshore Habitat Program also facilitates the [Washington State Kelp Research and Monitoring Workgroup](#).

NEW STATEWIDE FLOATING KELP INDICATOR

In May 2023, a new statewide floating kelp indicator was released to inform management and research actions. An alliance of diverse organizations completed the project, including the DNR Nearshore Habitat Program, The Samish Indian Nation, The Northwest Straits Commission and the county Marine Resource Committees, University of Washington, Sea Grant and Marine Agronomics. The indicator will be added to The Puget Sound Partnership's Vital Signs.

- [Statewide Summary Report](#)
- [Monitoring Program Design and Data Assessment Protocols](#)
- [Interactive Map](#)

CONTACT

Nearshore Habitat Program
360-902-1030
nearshore@dnr.wa.gov

RELATED LINKS

[Nearshore Habitat Program Biotic Community Monitoring](#)
[Eelgrass Monitoring](#)
[Eelgrass Stressor Response Program](#)
[Seagrass Restoration Inventory](#)
[Special Projects Publications](#)
[Puget Sound Eelgrass Monitoring Data Viewer](#)
[WA Marine Vegetation Atlas](#)

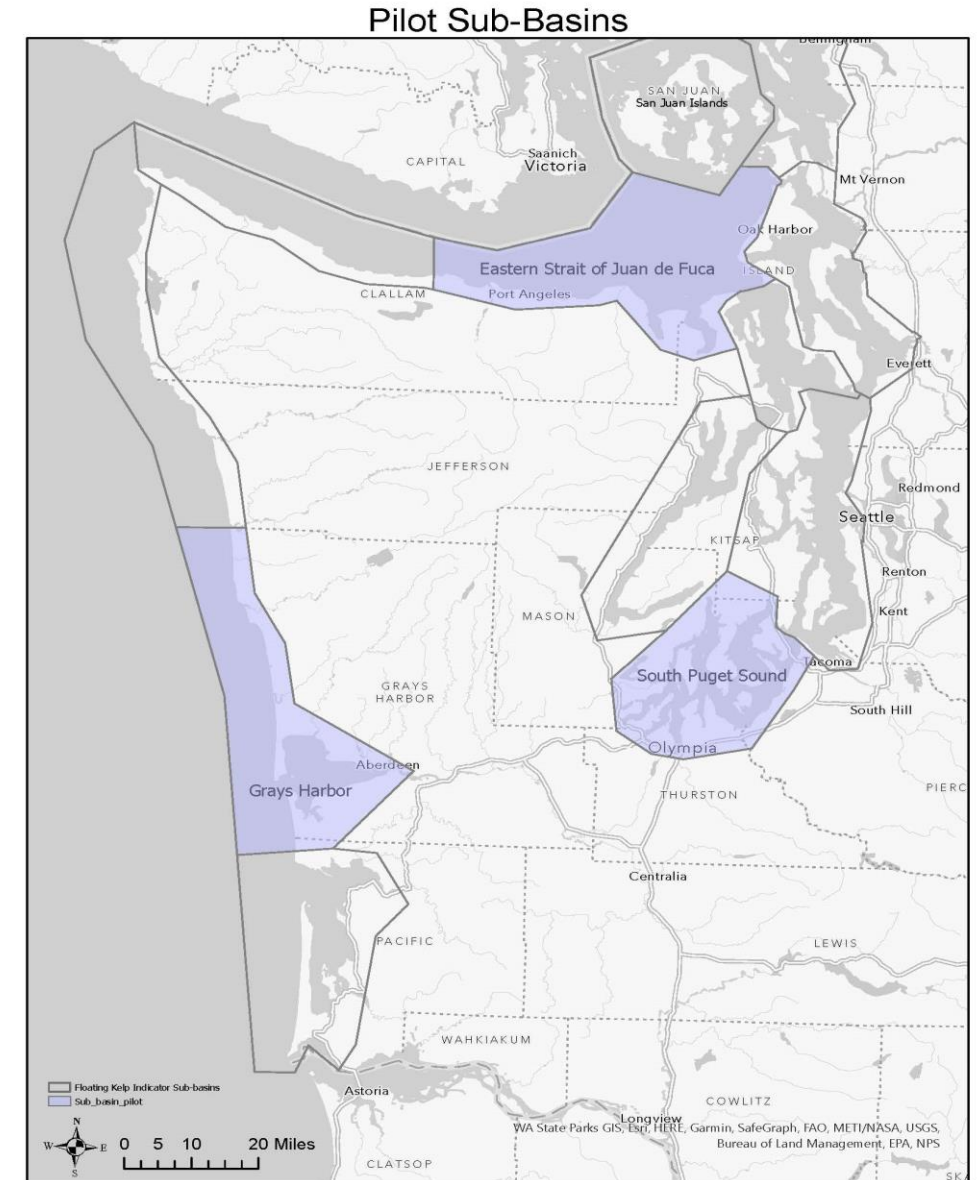
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SUB-BASIN PLANNING

Desired Outcomes

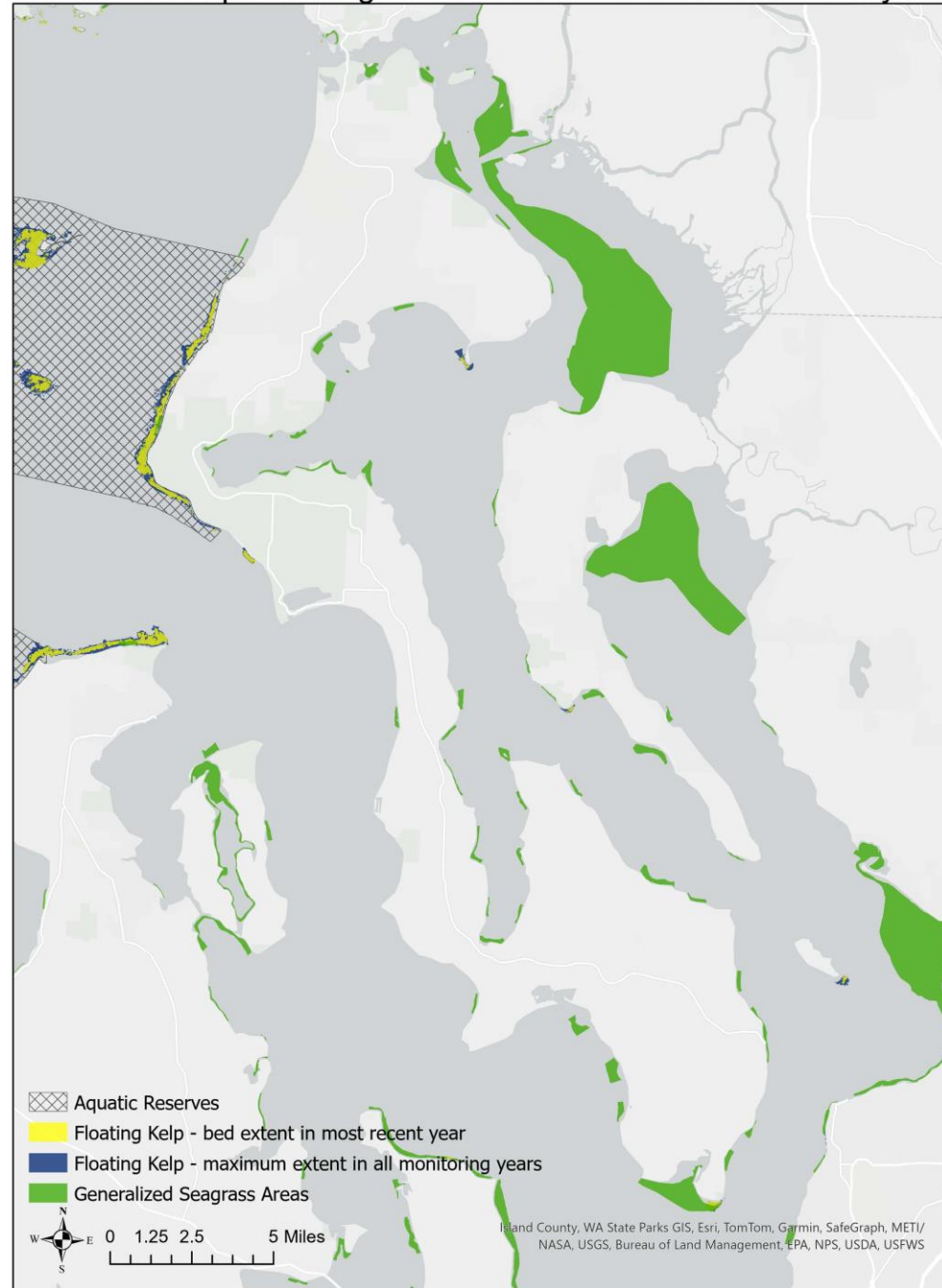
A kelp and eelgrass protection zone that:

- Has strong shared values, given an overview of stressors and trends
- Reflects Tribally identified values and needs, with full Tribal support
- Has partner and public buy-in
- State-owned aquatic lands available for a withdrawal order

A high-level plan of activities associated with the protection zone with:

- Developed with Tribes as co-stewards
- A synthesis of stressors in the area
- At least one key partner
- A map of DNR resources that can be applied or are needed

Statewide Kelp and Eelgrass Health Plan - Eastern Strait Layers



CONTACTS

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dnr.wa.gov/kelp-and-eelgrass-plan

