



Quiet Sound Leadership Committee Meeting Summary

July 23, 2024

Meeting notes v. 7/26/24

Action Items & Decisions

Action Items	Who	Status
Port of Seattle to connect Quiet Sound with their state government affairs lead.	Kathleen Hurley	
Reach out to Quiet Sound if you'd like to be involved with the Quiet Sound state funding coalition.	Leadership Committee members	
Quiet Sound to work with ECHO to develop a map that shows ECHO and Quiet Sound slowdown zones.	Quiet Sound staff	
Quiet Sound to set up meetings for the advisory group.	Quiet Sound staff	
Quiet Sound to invite the Leadership Committee to an optional NFWF brainstorming session.	Quiet Sound staff	
Feedback on the 2023-24 Slowdown report is requested by Friday, August 2, 2024.	Leadership Committee members	

Decisions

The Leadership Committee approved the strategic plan as a working document.
The Leadership Committee approved the 2024-25 Slowdown parameters.

Acronyms

Acronyms: *ECHO* - Enhancing Cetacean Habitat and Observation, *LC* - Leadership Committee, *NFWF* - National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, *QS* - Quiet Sound, *SRKW* - Southern Resident Killer Whale, *WRAS* - Whale Report Alert System



Meeting Notes

Welcome/Introductions

Kate Snider provided a land and water acknowledgement. Grace Ferrara (NOAA Fisheries) shared that the Center for Whale Research has seen all three SRKW pods at Swiftsure Bank. NOAA researchers from the Alaska Fishery Science Center saw them there as well. NOAA Fisheries and the Seattle Aquarium have done another printing of the killer whale trading cards. They feature conservation messages, which includes a shout-out to Quiet Sound.

Kate Snider provided an overview of the agenda and meeting expectations.

Quiet Sound has hired Gonzalo Banda-Cruz as the Program Manager focusing on whale detections and alerts to commercial mariners- Gonzalo will start shortly. Sara Adams has been promoted to a permanent Program Manager focusing on the voluntary vessel operational measures. She will be working part-time while she finishes her master's at UW, then full-time after that. Sara's thesis is about quantifying the air emissions and fuel savings benefits of the Quiet Sound slowdown.

24-25 Budget

Rachel provided an update on the 2024-25 budget. She shared upcoming fundraising proposals and grants. Quiet Sound will come back to the Leadership Committee with proposals for any unassigned funds.

Quiet Sound is submitting a proposal for the Bezos Earth Fund Challenge - conservation solutions that use AI. Quiet Sound is partnering with Ocean Wise on using machine learning for thermal imaging and hydrophone detection.

Quiet Sound will hold a brainstorming session for the upcoming NFWF funding cycle, to hear from any interested Leadership Committee members.

Quiet Sound/Maritime Blue working with a lobbyist (have worked with her before successfully) to prepare for the Washington State biennial budget conversations. Nora Nickum has volunteered to lead the Quiet Sound state funding coalition. Request: please reach out to Quiet Sound if you'd like to be involved with the Quiet Sound state funding coalition.

Questions and Comments:

- Q: What are the costs associated with the thermal imaging project? A: We're not sure at this time, developing the detailed budget is the next step.
- Jason Jordan thanked the Quiet Sound team for collaboration in contracting.

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- Kathleen will connect Quiet Sound to the Port of Seattle's State Government Affairs Lead. Some Leadership Committee members offered to provide a letter of support for legislative engagement.
- Q: ECHO's funding? A: Vancouver Fraser Port Authority matches federal funding, some funding from specific corporations. Harbor fees.
- Q: Any conversations with Cantwell's office? A: Quiet Sound was included in [Cantwell's FY25 appropriations requests](#).

SMRU Acoustic Results

SMRU Consulting presented the acoustic analyses from the 2023-24 slowdown. Highlights include:

- Slowdown took place from Oct 12, 2023 - Jan 12, 2024; hydrophone was deployed from Nov 12, 2023 - Feb 9, 2024 in Useless Bay off Whidbey Island.
- Analyses control for wind, current, and noise from the hydrophone itself and small boats.
- Slowdown reduced underwater noise by 3 dB, a 50% decrease (and more than 23-24). Reduction of noise as consistent across frequency bands. Reduction in noise in frequencies that SRKW use to echolocate and communicate. There was a decrease in vessel speed across all vessel types (except for tankers, but low sample size).
- 'Quiet times' refers to periods of times that are quieter and are believed to cause little or no disturbance to SRKW. Quiet times increased during the slowdown.
- Large commercial vessels had higher source levels (i.e. made more noise). Note that cruise ships were not included because their season ended before hydrophone deployment.
- Noise budget = amount of noise each vessel type contributed. Looking across different noise budget studies, the contribution of vessel types is sensitive to source levels.

Questions and Comments:

- Comment: It would be helpful to contextualize WSF strategies for mitigating impacts on SRKW (i.e. they use WRAS and slow down significantly when in the presence of SRKW- but this won't be reflected in a season-long underwater noise analysis).
- Q: Is it correct to say that slowing the fastest vessels results in a greater reduction of noise? A: The relationship is generally linear. However, you can see with tugs that over 11 knots is where their noise contribution increases more dramatically.
- Comment: Cruise ships are not captured by hydrophone data. SMRU is welcome to use the cruise ship source level from ECHO.
- Comment: Transport Canada is re-doing Noise contributor study. One thing they did was change the size of the circle to represent the noise contribution (i.e. slowdown pie chart is smaller than baseline). Quiet Sound might consider doing that to show

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not only the proportions changing but also the total amount of noise generated changing.

- Q: How many vessel transits are part of the 1% data left after filtering? A: Maddie can provide that number.
- Q: Possible to make speed recommendations for vessel types to achieve 'quiet times'? A: We're interested in exploring that. One thing to keep in mind is that when vessels slow, they are increasing the amount of time they spend in an area.

2024-25 Slowdown Parameters

Sara Adams presented the parameters and accompanying rationale for the 2024-25 voluntary vessel slowdown.

The Leadership Committee approved the proposed parameters for the 2024-25 voluntary vessel slowdown.

Questions and Comments:

- Q: It looks like the SRKW left in January and then came back in February? Is there a future year where the slowdown could continue into February? A: Correct, SRKW do seem to leave and return to the Sound. In terms of the baseline period, it makes the most sense for that to occur in January/February, not before the slowdown due to the seasonal use of the Sound. However, if we ever decided not to deploy a hydrophone, the slowdown could extend that long, feasibly. The hydrophone needs to be retrieved by February 15 as that is when in-water work in Washington must be complete, so as not to disturb juvenile salmon that are migrating. The other thing we must consider is battery life of the hydrophone recording unit to avoid another boat trip. However, SMRU is looking at ways to delay recording or extend the battery life.
- Comment: Quiet Sound to work with ECHO to develop a map that shows ECHO and Quiet Sound slowdown zones.
- Q: Are government vessels included in the slowdown? A: They are not a target vessel type, but we do share the parameters with them. It does seem like the naval transits slowed during the slowdown.

Strategic Planning

The goal of this session was to affirm the draft strategic plan as a working document.

The group discussed next steps for operationalizing the strategic plan, including developing project details and KPIs and defining a process for updating the strategic plan.

- Quiet Sound to send out invites for the advisory group meetings, where we can get broad input on things like project charters.
- Quiet Sound will develop a template for project charters to ensure consistency.

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Quiet Sound Project Updates

- Hydrophone feasibility workshop will take place Wednesday, July 31. We will be hearing from current WA hydrophone owners and operators to understand which are capable of connecting to WRAS and potential pathways to get them connected. Presenters include: Scott Veirs (Acartio), Ocean Wise (WRAS API), SMRU Consulting (LimeKiln hydrophone).
- WRAS - In April, 1500 alerts (100x increase compared to last April). Sightings impacted by Orca Network having consistent funding.

Leadership Committee Updates

- Port of Seattle: We will be holding a meeting to provide input on the Port of Seattle's study related to establishing a baseline for our noise signature in Elliot Bay (point of contact: Danielle Butsick). Regarding the NOAA Hydrophone study, surveys have been sent out. Expected completion is May 2025.
- Marine Exchange: An update that our AIS transmission licensing is now with USCG. Once licensed, will install two transceivers. Possible to automate whale sightings, have spoken with Ocean Wise. ME supports Scott Veirs thermal imaging on land (but it's too far for whale detection). ME adding another thermal camera on the West Seattle buoys (\$90k → 9k). ME put together a pamphlet (with NOAA, WDFW, USCG) about whales in the Puget Sound for mariner awareness (Cetacean Guide for Mariners).
- Puget Sound Partnership: Todd has been engaging with AWO regarding a standard of care for tugs that may be geographically confined to the slowdown area during the slowdown time.

Attendees

- Rachel Aronson, Quiet Sound Program Director, Washington Maritime Blue
- Sara Adams, Quiet Sound Program Manager, Washington Maritime Blue
- Cassidy Fisher, Director, Joint Innovation Program, Washington Maritime Blue
- Todd Hass, Special Assistant to the Director, Puget Sound Partnership
- Grace Ferrara, Natural Resource Management Specialist, NOAA Fisheries
- Patrick Gallagher, Executive Director of the Marine Exchange of Puget Sound
- John Veentjer, Former Executive Director, Marine Exchange
- Mike Moore, Pacific Merchant Shipping Association (PMSA)
- Kate Snider, Principal and Founder of Floyd|Snider
- Nora Nickum, Senior Ocean Policy Manager at Seattle Aquarium
- Melanie Knight, ECHO, Port of Vancouver
- Kathleen Hurley, Senior Environmental Program Manager, Port of Seattle
- Gretchen Hanshew, Acting Branch Chief, NOAA Fisheries

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- Kevin Bartoy, Chief Sustainability Officer, Washington State Ferries
- Adrienne Stutes, Biology Program Lead, Washington State Ferries
- Kathleen Hurley, Maritime Environmental Program Manager, Port of Seattle
- Jason Jordan, Director of Environmental Programs, Northwest Seaport Alliance, Port of Tacoma
- Natalie Lowell, Environmental Policy Analyst, Makah Tribe
- Regan Nelson, Senior Advocate, NRDC
- Madalina Matei, Research Scientist, SMRU Consulting