

ISLAND COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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Minutes

Prepared by Caitlin Budd

May 2, 2017

COMMISSIONERS' HEARING ROOM B-102, COUNTY ANNEX, COUPEVILLE

PRESENT: Elsa Schwartz, Chair presiding, Barbara Bennett, Vice-Chair, Ed Adams, Ed Halloran, Ruth Richards, Lois Farrington, Frances Wood, Kestutis Tautvydas, Florian Graner, Tim Lawrence, Lori Clark, Dave Thompson (WebEx), Tom Leschine (WebEx), Dawn Pucci, Caitlin Budd (Temporary MRC staff)

ABSENT: Jill Johnson, Todd Zackey, Linda Rhodes, Tony Turpin, Tim Lawrence, William Bell

VISITORS: Stacy Larsen (ExaData), Jim Somers (Seining), Beau Gaughran (Communications Intern WebEx), Matthew Colston (IC Public Health Intern), Joe Hillers, Jennifer Riedmayer (IC DNR)

CALL TO ORDER: Schwartz called the meeting to order at 3:30pm. **INTRODUCTIONS:** Introductions were done. **QUORUM:** A quorum was declared. **AGENDA:** Tautvydas moved to approve the agenda with a switch in the order of the seining and LIO presentations. Wood seconded. The agenda was approved. **MINUTES:** Bennett moved to approve the minutes that included the addition of William Bell to the list of members present. Wood seconded. The minutes for the Island County MRC meeting held on April 4, 2017 were approved.

CORRESPONDENCE:

State of Washington Department of Health sent a letter addressed to the chair of IC MRC. The letter explained that Penn Cove is classified as conditionally approved. Bacteria levels are near the limit of the standard or a source of significant pollution was identified during a shoreline survey.

Discussion points:

- Adams inquired as to the response process for MRC.
- Clark drew a diagram showing the region that is threatened for downgrade (the area west of Penn Cove Park WWTP or Coupeville WWTP, map available at <https://fortress.wa.gov/doh/eh/maps/biotoxin/biotoxin.html>)
- DOH samples are taken once a month at around 20 sites in the cove. Clark suggested that the MRC partner with IC Surface Water Quality (SWQ) team to assist with educating property owners around Penn Cove as to how they affect Penn Cove WQ and steps they can take to reduce their impact. Sound Water Stewards Digging for Dinner in June was suggested as an opportunity for outreach.
- Currently the beach is closed by WDFW. A warning of the conditionally approved status will go up when WDFW removes its signage.

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- The IC SWQ team has not sampled in Penn Cove since 2008. The team will begin Source ID efforts (deploying fluorometer, backtracking up watershed from pour points to find human and animal sources of pollution).
- Pucci recommends that the message MRC members should carry is for people to check the WA DOH Shellfish hotline before harvesting and consuming. Signage could also stress this point.
- There will be follow-up next meeting on WA DOH's process in deciding changes in classification (how much data do they base it on, over what time period, what are their methods etc.).
- WA DOH does take tide into consideration when sampling.

Northwest Straits representatives requested that MRCs sign on to a letter of support for Puget Sound Day on the Hill. Due to the timeframe, IC MRC was unable to sign because approving support currently requires a full MRC meeting vote.

Schwartz presented the letter sent out by Northwest Straits for the MRC to sign on to for future use. Multiple state organizations have signed the letter already. It is not lobbying.

Schwartz suggested that alternative options for signing letters of support be discussed. Halloran proposed that a member of the Executive Committee (EC) can sign after consulting one other EC member. Signers would review consistency with the priorities of the MRC.

ACTIONS/DECISIONS/FOLLOW-UP

- **ACTION:** Farrington moved for the MRC to sign on to the letter of support for use by Northwest Straits. Wood seconded. Approved unanimously.
- **ACTION:** Halloran moved for an Executive Committee member to be able to sign a letter of support after consulting and receiving approval from one other EC member. Adams seconded. Approved unanimously.
- **Clark will present with further information on DOH Penn Cove sampling methods and how DOH shellfish bed downgrades are determined.**
- **Budd will email out letter for Puget Sound on the Hill that MRC agreed to sign on to.**

ILIO PRESENTATION

Lori Clark (ILIO) presented on the four year ecosystem recovery plan that is up for adoption later this month. Clark has already presented this and received feedback from the Water Resource Advisory Committee and the Salmon Recovery Technical Committee. These plans are requested by the EPA to maintain consist metrics and vetting between various LIOs. Puget Sound Vital Signs (available at <http://www.psp.wa.gov/vitalsigns/>) are the overarching measure used to determine the health of Puget Sound.

Clark presented on vital signs relevant to the MRC and explained some of the stressors affecting them. She solicited feedback from MRC members on the feasibility of the plan's goals for indicators of ecosystem health:

- Eelgrass acreage:
 - o DNR's goal is to see a 20% increase in eelgrass bed area

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- Western Penn Cove bed area has decreased and eastern Penn Cove has increased.
- The total acreage of eelgrass beds has remained stable, but the distribution of the eelgrass has changed.
- Damage from boats, shrimp farming and invasive green crabs both present threats to eelgrass beds.
- Adams suggested that a more realistic goal may be to maintain existing acreage rather than aiming for an increase.
- Estuaries:
 - SRTCC is developing metrics for pocket estuary evaluation.
- Forage fish:
 - The LIO goal is to maintain or increase forage fish abundance.
 - The MRC only does a few beaches. WDFW encourages expansion of monitoring to other beaches as well, but the MRC has a limited capacity. MRC only samples for presence rather than abundance. Phil Dionne (WDFW) is exploring possibilities for measuring abundance.
 - Importance of measuring success of the eggs was discussed (ratio of viable to dead, for example).
 - Stormwater and shoreline armoring are considered the major pressures on forage fish presence and abundance. However, Maple Grove, a heavily armored beach, has the highest rate of presence of Island County sites presently being surveyed.
- Water quality:
 - The LIO goal is to increase Water Quality Index scores.
- Shellfish beds:
 - The LIO goal is to prevent downgrades. More focus is shifting to water quality to prevent degradation.

All of these indicators are overlaid on a map and considered holistically to prioritize Near Term Action sites. Clark needs to receive any feedback the MRC has on the plan by May 15th.

SEINING PRESENTATION

In 2012, a creosote bulkhead was removed from Cornet Bay. In 2015, a smaller section of adjacent beach was also restored. The seining team now has four years of pre and three years of post-restoration data.

- A significant number of juvenile fish come out of the Skagit each spring and these fish can potentially use Cornet Bay.
- The bay has lower salinity. Overhanging trees provide food (insects drop into water). There is also less predation by larger fish.
- Kurt Fresh helped with defining the sampling site.
- Basic method: walk straight out from shore to 1m depth with the net, make a circle and walk back to shore, transfer catch to an aerated tub, process catch by identifying all the fish and measuring (length = nose to fork) the first 20 of each species at each site
- A fish is identified at random at each site and the identification as well as a photo of the fish is sent to Anna Kagley at NOAA fisheries for ID verification as a quality control.

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- Water quality information is recorded (temperature, salinity, dissolved oxygen). Temperature is measured at the water's surface and a lower depth at both .5m and 1m from shore.
- In the last two years, there has been a major chinook capture in January and February. Pinks only show up in the net every other year due to life cycle.
- Cornet bay is a nursery for juvenile fish, but it cannot be said definitively that fish diversity has increased as a result of restoration.
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ACTIONS/DECISIONS/FOLLOW-UP

- **ACTION:** Send feedback to Clark on the Ecosystem Recovery Plan by May 15th before she goes to the LIO Executive Committee Meeting May 23rd.

NWSC GRANT REPORTS:

Eelgrass Monitoring: The Eelgrass monitoring program is set for 2017. Ten beds will be monitored using aerial photography, underwater videography and multi beam sonar (Albert Foster). This is the last year that Gregg Ridder, Ken Urstad, and Albert Foster will participate in this project. What we will do with this project in 2018 will need to be worked out in the coming months.

Seining: The seining project has been suspended for 2017 and 2018 due to absence of future specific sites to be monitored. A draft of the final report on 8 years of seining data at the Cornet Bay shoreline restoration site has been written by Barney Boyer (NOAA Affiliate) and should be issued in the near future.

Kelp Monitoring: Lucas Hart (NW Straits Commission) held a Bull Kelp Workshop in Port Townsend on Saturday, April 15th to share plans for the upcoming field season. At least one kelp project representative from each MRC, except San Juan, was able to attend. Linda Rhodes & Debra Paros attended for Island MRC. In addition to 2017 plans, alternative opportunities such as using satellite imaging (Jeff Taylor, Jefferson) & updates on Sound IQ & similar web-based maps (Suzanne Shull) were discussed. Max Calloway, a Masters student at Evergreen working with Tom Mumford, presented results of an extensive literature search for changes in kelp forest assemblages from around the world.

2017 bull kelp field season. In addition to maintaining in-the-water surveys of beds from 2016, a new aspect for 2017 will be reporting bull kelp bed sightings through a simple on-line form. The objective is to capture a "snapshot" of bull kelp bed locations throughout Island County. Data validity will rely on redundancy (multiple reports of the same beds) & ground truth confirmation. Brief instructions & a link to the on-line form will be posted on the kelp project webpage on the MRC's website.

Sound Water Stewards project fair. Linda Rhodes participated in Sound Water Stewards project fair in Coupeville on Monday, April 24th. She shared results & 2017 survey plans with members to recruit participants in the project.

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Outreach: Beau Gaughran was hired as the Communications Intern. He is currently working on a poster for the Citizen Science Conference Bennett will be attending on May 17th. He will be calling all of the project leads to collect information for creating materials that showcase the whole portfolio of the MRC's monitoring and projects. These materials will include short synopsis of what's been done, where the project is going, and who project leads partner with. This is the first phase in the process of developing fact sheets and updating the website descriptions. Beau and Florian will be working together on developing a video. He is also looking into equipment for identification purposes when MRC members are out on the beach. Educational forum in the fall.

OTHER REPORTS:

Smith and Minor Islands: The Reserve's Citizen Committee is developing posters for the kiosk at Libbey Beach Park. Martha & Steve Ellis have drafted a birds-of-the-reserve poster, & Rick Baker & Linda Rhodes are working on a bull kelp poster. Drafts will probably be placed on the kiosks, to be replaced by more professional versions by graphic artists with WA Department of Natural Resources. Rick & Betty Bookheim (WA DNR) are working on protocols for the 2017 survey season. Rick will lead the harvest social survey, & Betty will lead the intertidal survey. First survey date is Friday, April 28th.

Island Local Integrating Organization: No updates.

Sound Water Stewards: Sound Water Stewards had a job fair. Many examples of citizen science projects were showcased (forage fish). Project leads are meeting with Linda Ridder this Thursday May 4th.

WSU Extension: Beach Naturalist modules (stream ecology, limnology) are out of review. The Extension currently offers continuing education for nursing and may further expand to other disciplines.

LEADERSHIP REPORTS

Chair: July 4th would be the subsequent meeting, so there is potential for moving the meeting to July 11th. Clallam and Island meet in Jefferson and a joint meeting could be suggested for this date. Budd will reach out to Jefferson about a July, potentially August, meeting and invite Clallam once a date is decided. Kelp, forage fish, outreach ideas, green crab, protective work with eelgrass, and armor removal could all be discussed jointly.

Meetings: The next meeting is June 6th and Anna will be back from maternity leave.

Reminder: None.

County Lead: The Board of Island County Commissioners wants to know the larger implications of the MRC's work to ensure that the research accomplishes a goal. There is potential for a MRC retreat to develop some big picture project goals. Could all efforts be

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focused towards on large project? What are our research questions and how is that information applicable in informing county decision-making?

County Commissioners: No report.

COMMUNITY COMMENT FORUM AND Q&A FROM THE PUBLIC:

Stacy Larsen (ExaData): Larsen is the owner of a database and mapping company that moved from Port Townsend to Oak Harbor. ExaData contracts with NOAA and organizations that deal with oil spills. They standardize data and make sure it meets requirements. They perform analysis or organize data in preparation for analysis. Larsen is interested in connecting on the local level and hopes to work with local organizations.

Graner shared that the elephant seal is back (near Limpet Ln, tucked against an armored shoreline north of Double Bluff).

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business and no further comments, the meeting adjourned at 5:26 pm.