



Island County Marine Resources Committee

MINUTES

October 16, 2002, 4–6 pm

Approved Nov. 6, 2002
Trinity Lutheran Church
Freeland
Audio Recorded

Present: Chair Tom Campbell, Hi Bronson, Mike Gallion, Jim Hawley (Roehl alt.), Phyllis Kind, Sayed El-Sayed, Jeff Tate, Dick Toft, Exec. Director Gary Wood, Admin. Ass't. Dan Pedersen.
Absent: Martin Behr, Don Meehan, Roger Sherman, Benye Weber.

Visitors: Dr. Jacques White, director of Science and Habitat Programs, People for Puget Sound; Frank Roberts, Consulting Engineer, Greenbank; Bill White, Beach Watchers.

Call to order: 4:05 pm, Chair Tom Campbell declared a quorum and called the meeting to order.

Agenda: Adopted, no objections.

Minutes of Oct. 2, 2002: Adopted. Moved by Bronson, seconded by Kind, carried unanimously.

Speaker: Dr. Jacques White, People for Puget Sound. Synopsis follows minutes.

Reports

> **Public Relations.** Dan Pedersen reported that he, Don Meehan, Tom Roehl and Jeff Tate had met last Friday as the PR subcommittee and adopted the tagline, *Science, Education, Stewardship*, and a logo consisting of the Deception Pass Bridge, with three forage fish and some stylized eelgrass in the foreground. At this time, the graphic designer is working to integrate the committee's name and tagline with the graphic. Pedersen invited the group to comment. Phyllis Kind said the logo seemed busy to her -- she'd prefer something more abstract. Mike Gallion recommended viewing the logo smaller, as it will appear. Pedersen said Don Meehan had done so and it held up well. Campbell invited anyone with additional feedback to e-mail it to Pedersen.

Executive Director's Report – Wood

> **Shoreline aerial photos.** Wood demonstrated the tremendous detail revealed in the latest shoreline aerial photos on the Department of Ecology Web site.

> **Letter of Intent approved.** Wood reported that our letter of intent has been approved by the Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC). This is a request for a \$70,000 action grant.

> **US Fish & Wildlife Service grant program.** Wood reported he has discovered a new grant program that looks like it was written for our Shore Stewards pilot program. These grants are for projects to do restoration or conservation of habitat by private landowners on their own property to benefit a listed endangered species.

> **RFP on feeder bluff study.** The RFP on the feeder bluff study will be published next week.

New / unfinished business. None.

Adjournment. There being no further announcements or business, Campbell declared the meeting adjourned at 5:50.

NEXT MEETING: 4-6 PM WED., NOV. 6, HELLER ROAD FIREHALL, OAK HARBOR.

Rapid Shoreline Inventory Assessments

Dr. Jacques White, People for Puget Sound
October 16, 2002

Jacques White, PhD, is director of Science and Habitat Programs for People for Puget Sound (PFPS), <http://www.pugetsound.org>. PFPS conducts Rapid Shoreline Inventories (RSIs) during the lowest tides of the summer.

PFPS recently completed an RSI on Samish Island for the Skagit Marine Resources Committee. The RSI in its current form was begun in 1999. The program uses trained volunteers to conduct inventories in 150-foot segments of shoreline, and is designed so the data can nest inside the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) ShoreZone database. The volunteers receive six hours of classroom training and four hours of field training before going onto the beach, where they work with either a biologist or a well-trained volunteer.

Skagit MRC asked PFPS to conduct the Samish Island RSI because they felt the nearshore was in reasonably good shape, and that the data from a survey would help them identify potential targets for conservation and restoration.

The surveys are conducted with permission from individual property owners. PFPS mailed requests to 320 property owners and followed up with telephone calls asking whether they'd be willing to participate in the study. Fifty-nine landowners agreed, 13 declined, and 248 did not respond. Fortunately, all the large landowners were represented, including some summer camps and DNR lands, so the survey was able to access 60 percent of the shoreline.

Unlike surveys that focus solely on the beach, the RSI looks also at the relationship between the beach and observable upland activities. It evaluates nearshore habitat, types of vegetation in the intertidal zone, bluff characteristics and height, vegetation, evidence of erosion, presence of invasive species, adjacent land use, trails, structures, bulkheads, jetties, docks, outfalls and signs of pollution. In the backshore, it looks at substrate, width of the backshore, types of vegetation, presence of driftwood, and evidence of accretion or erosion. In the intertidal zone, it notes substrate in the upper and lower intertidal areas. The shorezone study covers the bulk of the intertidal habitat, including the presence or absence of eelgrass, which can be there one year and gone the next. But if the right substrate is there, the potential at least exists for eelgrass. Again the survey notes invasive species such as spartina or sargassum. In the subtidal zone, it is difficult to gather information but if birds or marine mammals are observed, they are documented.

PFPS has developed mathematical formulas to weigh all this information and identify targets for restoration and conservation. The process involves assigning a score to marine vegetation, feeder bluff function, potential for forage fish spawning, potential for juvenile salmonid usage and potential to support marine birds. In addition to assigning numeric scores for benefits, PFPS also has a system for assigning points for detractors that lower the score for conservation—developed land use, trails or access to shoreline, structures present, armoring, loss of habitat, etc.

To identify conservation targets, PFPS looks for sites that are all benefits and no deficits—there are no impacts that would detract from that score. Identifying restoration targets is more difficult—the potential must exist for good habitat, but something correctable must be wrong with the site. If you have high-impact, high-function, you get a high restoration score. That would be a good place to go in and correct some of those problems.

One advantage of the RSI is that the landowners involved have all self-selected -- they know what the project is about and have chosen to participate. So they tend to be more inclined to cooperate with a conservation or restoration initiative than landowners who have not volunteered to be part of a survey.

One benefit of gathering this information is that it can equip planners with data to help them develop shoreline master plans. It identifies areas that might deserve extra consideration.

Question: Phyllis Kind asked whether it would be useful to ask Beach Watchers to expand the data they collect so their information could fit into the PFPS program. White responded yes. One of the reasons PFPS did not adopt the Beach Watchers protocol for its program was because Beach Watchers had been concerned with monitoring the health of the beach over time, whereas PFPS felt what was needed was an inventory of shoreline that was related to human impact on the beach, i.e. the land-use component.

White stressed the PFPS system's advantage of having a high level of contact and voluntary cooperation with the landowners. Gary Wood pointed out that the MRC has been able to gather data without having to ask landowner permission, by having a Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) employee do the field research.

So there are trade-offs. One approach yields more comprehensive information. The other generates information about shoreline areas where the landowners might be more predisposed to cooperate with future conservation or restoration efforts.