



## Island County Marine Resources Committee

<http://www.islandcountymrc.org>

# MINUTES

January 7, 2004, 4:04 – 6:05 pm

Heller Road Firehall  
Oak Harbor

**Present:** Chair Roger Sherman, Martin Behr, Hi Bronson, Sayed El-Sayed, Mike Gallion, Phyllis Kind, Don Meehan, Rolf Seitle, Jeff Tate, Dick Toft, Benye Weber, Admin. Ass't. Dan Pedersen.

**Absent:** Tom Campbell, Exec. Director Gary Wood.

**Visitors:** Linda Lyshall, Policy Consensus Center, University of Washington; Kim Bredensteiner, Island County Public Works, Nancy Waddell, Maxwellton Salmon Adventure; Frank Roberts, Lagoon Point.

**Call to order:** 4:04 pm, Sherman called the meeting to order.

**Quorum: Declared.**

**Agenda: Adopted** with the addition that starting at 5 pm, Linda Lyshall will have an hour in which to conduct an evaluation relating to Congressional reauthorization of the Northwest Straits Initiative.

**Minutes of 11-05-2003: Adopted.** Motion by Kind, second by Bronson, no objections.

**Minutes of 11-19-2003: No action.** There was no quorum 11-19-03 and no business was conducted.

**Bylaws regarding designating an alternate.** Sherman opened the meeting as vice-chair in the absence of chair, Tom Campbell. He said that in reviewing the bylaws, he noted that members who will have to miss a meeting may designate an alternate whose presence will count toward the quorum, but who may not vote. Several members said they do not have a copy of the bylaws. Meehan said he would post them to the MRC Website.

**Election of officers.** Sherman relinquished the meeting to Toft, who presented this slate of nominees for 2004 – **Chair Sherman, Vice-chair Kind and NWSC representative Wood. Adopted unanimously.** Sherman then resumed control of the meeting as chair.

**Executive Director's Report.** Sherman explained that Wood is en-route to the Asia Pacific Economic Conference (APEC) for a presentation on derelict gear recovery, and had submitted this written report:

### **Straits Initiative Review Weekend**

The much awaited process to determine the Straits Initiative's fate is upon us. As you know, the NWSC/MRC experiment is undergoing a Congressionally-mandated evaluation by a national panel of experts chaired by Bill Ruckelshaus and organized by the **Policy Consensus Center (PCC)**, a joint UW/WSU program. This "review" panel will convene during the holiday weekend of January 17-20 at the La Conner Country Inn, Skagit County. The results of the evaluation will help guide the future of the initiative and will inform efforts toward potential reauthorization. As a key personnel involved with the Northwest Straits, the reviewers need to gain your perspective on MRC activities, progress on benchmarks and other important aspects of operations.

[Please try to attend the reception and poster session for MRC members in the afternoon on Sunday, January 18.](http://www.laconnerlodging.com/images/newCon.%20F.%20Mappat%20(Converted.pdf) Here is a link to a map:

[http://www.laconnerlodging.com/images/newCon.%20F.%20Mappat%20\(Converted.pdf](http://www.laconnerlodging.com/images/newCon.%20F.%20Mappat%20(Converted.pdf)

### [Senator Murray a Shore Steward](#)

At a gathering at the Lighthouse with several Beach Watcher leaders, Patty Murray was presented with the signage and booklet and is an Honorary Shore Steward. The occasion was designed to explore the potential expansion of the BW program into all counties with MRCs, for which funding is provided by the Omnibus Budget Bill before Congress now.

### Stewardship Areas Designated

The BOCC unanimously passed the MRC's Resolution as reported in the Whidbey News-Times:

### DNR Project

The Department of Natural Resources (per Dave Roberts) is interested in providing our MRC with a \$15,000 grant for a pilot Oak Harbor beach restoration project. This is a smaller, feasibility-oriented version of our Maylor's Marsh SRFB proposal, to be partnered with the Navy. It would be nice to use all of the work that went into that proposal, and achieve an outcome on the ground. Please discuss this and advise me if the MRC is interested in such an effort, or perhaps in another small restoration project.

### Grants Status - Several Not Approved

While the \$70,000 NWSC 2004 contract is approved and in preparation, both our PIE signage and National Fish and Wildlife Conservation applications were not funded. Your E.D. is actively pursuing alternate funding sources. At present funding levels, my contract will expire this summer. On the upside, I will be in Honolulu from 1/8 – 1/17 for the **Asian Pacific Economic Conference [APEC]** on Derelict Gear Recovery courtesy of the US Department of State. The Japanese may steal me for a new career in Executive Sumo, no?

### Download Newsletter

Check out the coverage of our projects in the new edition: <http://www.nwstraits.org/12-03-Newsletter.pdf>

### **Meehan's report.**

**DNR Grant.** Meehan explained that the DNR originally had offered each MRC \$10,000 for habitat-related projects and that there was a misperception it was to be used only for creosote removal. He said it's actually for on-the-ground nearshore habitat work, of which creosote is one possibility. Meehan said he and Wood have talked to Roberts about other possible uses for that grant money. Some counties have chosen not to accept, so the pot has grown to about \$15,000 for each MRC. Wood and Meehan have

discussed using our portion for some part of the Maylor's Marsh project we've proposed before. Meehan said it appears DNR owns the Maylor's Marsh land that previously appeared to be Navy-owned, and that

## Shoreline Program Created

### By Nathan Whalen

To encourage involvement in preserving the shoreline environment, the Island County Commissioners established two Marine Stewardship Areas during their Monday meeting last week.

The "Saratoga Passage Marine Stewardship Area," and the "Admiralty Inlet Marine Stewardship Area," cover the entire shoreline of Whidbey Island while keeping current regulations intact. No new restrictions will be added.

Island County WSU Extension Coordinator Don Meehan said the stewardship designation should help spur environmental education.

"The more people understand it, the more they can appreciate it and protect it," Meehan said of the Whidbey Island waterfront environment.

Existing WSU Extension programs, such as the volunteer Beachwatchers, will be modified to include the stewardship areas. Eventually kiosks and signs will be placed at parks to help educate people about the subject.

The Beachwatchers program has a history of rallying public involvement in environmental education, so working within the stewardship areas will be a natural fit. Beachwatchers provided 13,000 hours of volunteer labor annually, which is the equivalent of 6 full-time county staff workers.

Meehan didn't have any specifics on the program yet. His first priority was to attain the designation from the commissioners. Meehan said the stewardship areas will lead to more environmental protection without having to add further regulations.

Those sentiments were echoed by Gary Wood, Marine Resources Committee executive director.

"It recognizes the best assets in the county without regulating," Wood said. "We didn't create a regulatory area here. We did just the opposite."

Meehan said the stewardship area concept is less controversial than a Marine Protected Area, which regulates fishing activities, for example. There are two such areas on the island, at Keystone jetty and Camp Casey.

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they like the idea of a project on their land. Tate mentioned another possible area to consider for a habitat project on lands adjacent to the General Mark Clark Bridge to Camano Island. He said DNR does not yet own these reclaimed tidelands, but has been talking to property owners about acquiring them.

Stewardship Areas. Meehan distributed a packet of information about the stewardship areas and explained that more information about our projects is available on the Website. Meehan said the article that appeared in the Whidbey News-Times was "pretty marginal" in explaining the significance of the stewardship designation, but he had since talked with John Dean, editor of the Stanwood-Camano News, who seems to understand. He is hopeful a better write-up is coming soon in that newspaper.

Beach Watchers Expansion. Meehan said WSU had submitted a proposal to the federal government, via Meehan, to extend Beach Watchers to the six other Northwest Straits Commission counties. Meehan said we're on the cusp of getting this program funded federally for the first year. On Dec. 19, Senator Murray and her staff visited Beach Watchers' HQ at Admiralty Head Lighthouse and talked about the relationship between the Beach Watchers and the MRC. Tom Cowan and Mac McDowell were both there. Meehan anticipates this will get funded because it has already gone through Conference and been passed by the House with the Omnibus bill. This month the Senate will vote on the Omnibus bill.

Sound Waters 2004. Meehan invited members to register for Sound Waters, to be held Jan. 31. This year the program offers 39 classes – a great program – and he anticipates a full house. **Bronson moved, Toft seconded, a motion for the MRC to sponsor registration fees for members. Motion passed.** Kind voted no, on the grounds that members should pay their own way. Meehan pointed out there's a space on the online registration form to make a donation.

### New business

Conferences. Sherman noted two conferences are occurring this year that need to get on members' calendars. One of them is June 4-5, a Northwest Straits conference called "A Sound Investment." Bronson asked whether MRC reimbursement will be available for that. Meehan said he's not sure yet, that it'll be a tough year for funding, but he will think on it.

E.D. compensation. Weber asked what happens to Wood's compensation given that funding is so tight and some grants have not been awarded. Meehan replied Wood is paid through a variety of grant sources. His contract spells out that he will do certain things, which are tied back to the grants that fund him. Gallion asked if he could see the contract and Meehan said he would provide it.

Padilla Bay meeting. Sherman reported he attended a recent NWSC's meeting at Padilla Bay for county leads and MRC chairs. These meetings are held twice annually and he found it tremendously interesting.

Keystone Ferry environmental scoping. Kind attended the most recent WSF meeting on Keystone Ferry terminal improvement. She said limitations were placed on the type of comments entertained. WSF seems determined to replace the steel-electric ferries with the Issaquah 130-car vessels. WSF identified three terminal location alternatives – the existing location, an alternative located at the right-angle bend in Highway 20 near the gravel ponds, and a third option on private land about two miles further south. During this scoping stage of the process they will accept comments from the public. The deadline is Jan. 16. If we're going to comment, we need to submit our thoughts by then. Kind suggested we do so, and offered these questions: How great is the need? How often are these runs cancelled? How would it constitute an improvement in service if they replace two smaller boats with one larger boat that runs half as often? How often do groundings occur? What will the impact of new roads, parking lots and runoff be on the hydrology and biology of the area? Sherman commented that Highway 20 traffic increases six percent a year and that the Keystone approach is extremely scary. These are the only boats in the system that operate under Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) rules, carrying enough inflatable canisters for every passenger. "We have to do something." Behr said he wishes the WSF would add a passenger-only capability, since Seattle Pacific University plans to have a conference center at Camp Casey for as many as 300 people, and it would be nice not to have to route them all through the summer weekend backup at the Mukilteo Ferry. Sherman noted one of the concerns of the Audubon Society is what would happen to the tide gate for Crockett Lake if WSF abandons Keystone Harbor. The tide gate would eventually silt-in. Kind said she will work with Pedersen to draft a letter to WSF about the MRC's concerns.

**Public input.** Frank Roberts commented he had attended the county commissioners' session Dec. 22, when they adopted the marine stewardship areas. He said the commissioners allowed him to ask how this would affect his own property, and he was pleased with their answer and came away happy. He also said he had recorded a 22-minute video of an intense storm Oct. 28, showing how wave action interacted with man-made structures and debris at Lagoon Point, and he'd like to show it to the MRC in the future.

**Linda Lyshall, Policy Consensus Center.**

Lyshall is writing a summary of written and verbal input received from the MRC members of each county. Summaries will be compiled the weekend of Jan. 10-11. On Jan. 18 the MRC members are invited to a social gathering with the review panel in LaConner. Lyshall noticed there was no tribal representative at our meeting and asked if there are any Usual & Accustomed tribal areas in Island County. Gallion commented there are lots of U&As. Sherman noted there is no tribal presence in the county. Meehan said there are so many MRCs it has been difficult for the tribes to extend representation to all, but that through the NWSC we've had tribal input. Lyshall's questions follow:

*What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of the MRCs?* Weber: "Diversified group." Behr: "One of our meetings each month is educational, so we can become more knowledgeable." Tate: "A big strength is our non-regulatory nature. In the Planning Dept. I notice a lot of people don't respond well to regulations, but do get excited and involved when presented with information." Kind: "Our focus is on science." Toft: "We're conducting studies and building a database that will be very useful in the future."

*What is your relationship with the county commissioners?* Toft: "They know we're here, they know we're doing stuff and I think they're listening." Adoption of the stewardship areas is a recent example.

*Do you see your role as advisory?* Toft: “Various county people attend our meetings.” Tate: “We contribute speakers and lecturers. My department uses data gathered through this committee.” Meehan: “We are clearly an advisor to the county commissioners and they rely on me to bring them concerns that are issues of the committee. They trust Dick and me to be sensitive and brief them in a timely manner.” Behr: “An important element of our success is that we have several county employees on the MRC.” Meehan: “What’s different about Island County is the MRC runs through my office and I’m a department head, so I meet with the commissioners regularly. In some other counties the people involved are further down in the structure and don’t have that level of access to the commissioners.” Gallion: “A downside of having so many county people on the MRC is that it compromises our ability to be an independent advisor.” Meehan: “The formula is to find people who have the time, knowledge and will to make a difference, within the guidelines established by the NWSC.”

*Do the commissioners often ask for advice on marine issues?* Bronson: “We initiate a lot of it.” Toft: “The city of Oak Harbor asked if we had data, and we provided it.”

*How is your relationship with the Northwest Straits Commission?* Sherman: “Most of us don’t know much about what’s going on at the NWSC – I learned a lot at the Padilla Bay meeting.” Meehan: “We have a lot going on and have a good relationship. The NWSC is grateful to us for Gary – he’s writing grants for them, too. Roger is right that Gary does tend to focus on his pet projects. The annual meeting with the commission typically is very well attended by the MRC.”

*How can the process be improved?* Weber and El-Sayed: “Grant-writing. The grants should be longer term so there isn’t so much time spent writing them.” El-Sayed: “This is all done by volunteers.” Behr: “It’s a phenomenal model – the local involvement results in tremendous enthusiasm and involvement. This is a good model for other areas to follow. We need to do more education and outreach.”

**Adjournment 6:05 pm:** At the conclusion of Lyshall’s discussion, Sherman declared the meeting adjourned. **Next meeting: 4-6 pm, Wednesday, January 21, Trinity Lutheran Church, Freeland.**