



Island County Marine Resources Committee

<http://www.islandcountymrc.org>

MINUTES

January 21, 2004, 4:04 – 6:05 pm

Trinity Lutheran Church

Freeland

Present: Vice-Chair Phyllis Kind, Hi Bronson, Tom Campbell, Mike Gallion, Don Meehan, Dick Toft, Benye Weber, Admin. Ass't. Dan Pedersen.

Absent: Martin Behr, Sayed El-Sayed, Rolf Seitle, Roger Sherman, Jeff Tate, Exec. Director Gary Wood.

Visitors: Robyn DuPre, Puget Sound Action Team, Bellingham; Kim Bredensteiner, Island County Public Works; Nancy Waddell, Maxwellton Salmon Adventure, Clinton; Melissa Young, film producer, "Net Loss," Frank Roberts, Lagoon Point; Sue Van Etten, Langley; Kit Turner, Greenbank; Tom Turner, Greenbank;

Call to order: 4:05 pm, Kind called the meeting to order.

Quorum: Declared. Pedersen is El-Sayed's alternate.

Agenda: Adopted with numerous changes. There will be no executive director's report; Wood is under the weather and resting after recent travels and a full schedule. There will be no report by the chair; Sherman is in the hospital for observation of an irregular heartbeat. DuPre, Campbell and Bredensteiner all request to speak briefly on various topics.

Minutes of 1-07-2004: Adopted. Motion by Bronson, second by Campbell, no objections.

Video: "Net Loss"

Producer: Melissa Young

Kind introduced producer Melissa Young of Whidbey Island, who with Mark Dworkin produced the video, "Net Loss," about the negative impacts of fish farming. In response to a question from Meehan, Young said they produced the film because they were interested in the topic and wanted to do it. They received some production financing from a few small grants but are still in the red. Young said "Net Loss" is likely to be broadcast on PBS later this spring.

As outlined in the film, the negative impacts of fish farming include the displacement of wild salmon from their habitat, the escape of farmed salmon from net-pens, interbreeding with wild stocks and the need to use very large amounts of antibiotics to control disease resulting from the overcrowded conditions. The meat must be artificially colored to make it marketable to consumers. Waste from the pens accumulates on the seafloor and can smother other sea life.

Perhaps more significant is that the farm fish are fed protein pellets manufactured from sea creatures that are further down the food chain. More than half the protein is lost in the process of making the pellets, so to produce a pound of farm fish, there is a net loss of protein from the biomass.

Young explained that only a small amount of fish farming is done in Puget Sound. Most fish farming is controlled by large companies headquartered in Norway. A majority of the production now takes place in Chile. A smaller amount is centered in Canada. The industry is being pushed to locate these installations further offshore. Having started with Atlantic salmon, they are now researching tuna, black cod, halibut and other fish.

Video: Lagoon Point Storm

Frank Roberts

Lagoon Point resident Frank Roberts shared a dramatic video he shot October 28, 2003, when a fierce windstorm hit Lagoon Point with little warning. The winds struck toward mid-afternoon around the time of high tide. Roberts shot much of the video from his second-floor deck. Surf crashed over the concrete bulkhead and repeatedly reached the second-story windows where Roberts was filming. Seawater ran down the street behind his home, into yards and eventually found its way back to into Puget Sound. The

high tide and wind action carried large drift-logs into the yards of some property owners, rearranging or removing other logs. Roberts has lived at Lagoon Point for 12 years and said a storm of this magnitude hits the area about every three years. Depending on wind direction and other variables, the impact can vary greatly within the space of just a few houses. A house that is hit hard one year may experience little effect from a similarly bad storm in another year.

County lead's report: Don Meehan

PSAT liaison: Robyn DuPre. Meehan introduced Robyn DuPre, who replaces Harriet Beale as our MRC's liaison from the Puget Sound Action Team. DuPre said the Action Team has received new marching orders from the Governor and can offer us help with issues of concern, advice on funding and assistance in partnering on projects. She is the contact person for any of these needs. Relatively little money is available from the PSAT for grants, but DuPre said they can provide limited seed grants to assist with small education and outreach opportunities. The application procedure is extremely simple – just a e-mail to her. It's important, if we do this, to make sure we keep her fully informed so she can be an advocate for our project. DuPre lives in Bellingham and will try to attend our meetings about once a month, generally when we meet in Oak Harbor.

Policy Consensus Center evaluation meetings of NWSC. Meehan, Sherman, Weber and Wood attended last weekend's meetings in LaConner of the team that is evaluating the Northwest Straits Initiative. Weber was invited to participate as a member of the roundtable discussion on business. Meehan participated in three others. Both said the team asked good, hard-hitting questions. Meehan said it seemed clear from the discussion Saturday that they were impressed with the Northwest Straits Initiative and were considering whether it should be expanded it to the South Sound as well. Weber said she emphasized that better funding is needed -- the MRCs must spend too much time generating grants.

Presenting Island County MRC's achievements. Meehan said it's clear to him that the accomplishments of Island County MRC are not receiving the recognition they deserve. He suggested to Sherman, Pedersen and Wood recently in an e-mail that we need to prepare a document summarizing these accomplishments. Pedersen has started work on it. Meehan asked for a committee to work with Pedersen, Wood and Meehan on it. Campbell and Kind volunteered.

Marine Stewardship Areas. Meehan said we need to get back to discussing how to proceed in marketing our marine stewardship areas. He suggested we devote time to this at our next meeting.

Regional Beach Watcher grant. Meehan said the United States Senate has postponed action on the Omnibus bill, but that he believes it will be signed and will include funding for Island County to export Beach Watchers to the six other Northwest Straits Commission counties in 2004.

Sound Waters University. Meehan announced that as of midmorning today, 301 people had enrolled in the Jan. 31 Sound Waters program. He said he is confident the remaining 49 spaces will be filled within a day or two.

Other business

Sponsorship of Audubon and Whidbey Institute lyceum series. Campbell asked if the MRC would be willing to join -- in name only, without costs – as a sponsor of this year's lyceum series, which focuses on marine issues. The lyceum will present speakers every Tuesday from March 30 – May 4. **Motion by Meehan that the MRC be a sponsor in name only. Second by Weber. All in favor except Gallion, who voted against.**

WRAC and Salmon TAG meetings. Kim Bredensteiner announced that either Meehan or Wood will make a presentation at the Feb. 5 WRAC meeting at Heller Road Firehall, from 6-8 pm. The next Salmon TAG meeting will be Feb. 10 in LaConner, at the WDFW office, from 2-5 pm.

Island Stewards. Meehan reported the county commissioners have blessed Bredensteiner's application to the Department of Ecology for a watershed grant. This grant includes funding for a proposed new Island Stewards program, the upland counterpart to Shore Stewards.

Adjournment. 6:18 pm. Kind declared the meeting adjourned.

Next meeting: Wednesday, Feb. 4, 2004, Heller Road Firehall, Oak Harbor, 4-6 p.m.