



Island County Marine Resources Committee

<http://www.islandcountymrc.org>

MINUTES

February 4, 2004, 4:05 – 6:03 pm

Heller Road Firehall
Oak Harbor

Present: Chair Roger Sherman, Martin Behr, Hi Bronson, Tom Campbell, Sayed El-Sayed, Phyllis Kind, Dick Toft, Exec. Director Gary Wood, Admin. Ass't. Dan Pedersen.

Absent: Mike Gallion, Don Meehan, Rolf Seitle, Jeff Tate, Benye Weber.

Visitors: Robyn DuPre, Puget Sound Action Team, Bellingham; Kim Bredensteiner, Island County Public Works; Frank Roberts, Lagoon Point.

Call to order: 4:05 pm, Sherman called the meeting to order, pointing out that a quorum was not yet present. Wood reported that Meehan's mother had died earlier in the day, accounting for his absence.

Quorum: Declared at 4:17 pm.

Agenda: Adopted. Campbell requests a few minutes to talk about the attendance problem.

Minutes of 1-21-2004: Adopted. Motion by Kind, second by Campbell, adopted unanimously.

Summary of Decisions

Stewardship committee appointed: Sherman, Behr, Campbell, Kind, Weber, Toft, El-Sayed, Meehan, Wood, Pedersen.

Wood to create stewardship area PowerPoint within next one to two months.

Wood authorized to apply for DNR grant: Maylor's Marsh restoration pilot. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Wood to coordinate MRC speakers' bureau.

Behr to seek Rotary speaking engagement to pitch financial support for stewardship areas.

Sherman to form an executive committee.

Pedersen to compile and distribute updated MRC address list including e-mail addresses.

Stewardship areas. Sherman opened a discussion on how to proceed with the stewardship areas. Among the suggestions were:

1. Create a PowerPoint members can use when they speak to groups.
2. Hold a public ceremony and photo opportunity, perhaps with the county commissioners, perhaps with Penn Cove in background.
3. Stage a boat tour with politicians aboard – perhaps to Camano Island, "to get Camano in there."
4. Explore the availability of tourism money to help promote stewardship areas, especially signage.
5. Use the undeveloped side of the Port of Coupeville's kiosk at Coupeville Wharf.
6. Partner with Port of South Whidbey on signage – Rolf has expressed interest.
7. Talk to the visitors' bureaus.
8. Approach the service clubs and civic groups about helping sponsor stewardship promotion.
9. Partner with Beach Watchers.
10. Conduct boat tours – not only for students but visitors.
11. Explore signage possibilities with Washington State Ferries.

Stewardship committee named: Sherman, Behr, Campbell, Kind, Weber, Toft, Pedersen, Meehan, Wood, Bronson, El Sayed.

El Sayed passed around a photograph he had taken of a superb interpretive sign at the Keystone Ferry Terminal.

Executive director's report – Wood

Policy Consensus Center (PCC) review panel: Wood said the PCC panel seemed extremely positive about the Northwest Straits Initiative. On the final day, Ruckleshaus asked, "Well how much money do you guys want?" NWSC chair, Paul Dinnel, submitted a wish list for an annual budget of \$120,000 for each MRC to support one fulltime employee apiece, and additional grants. This would be about double the current level. This year the NWSC is receiving \$750,000 from Congress. Patty Murray got an additional \$250,000 with the NWSC's blessing to expand WSU Beach Watchers to the other six NWSC counties. Beach Watchers is an incredible resource for volunteer talent and other counties would like to have it. Until now we've been the only MRC with an executive director, although four others are now seeking one. We are the only MRC that has done a Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) contract. Four of the MRCs have never sought additional funding beyond the NWSC.

Sound Investment Spring Conference. The NWSC's Sound Investment spring conference, June 4-5, at the Everett Events Center is intended to be a celebration of the hoped-for Congressional reauthorization of the Northwest Straits Initiative. Wood encourages MRC members to register online. Sen. Patty Murray and Gov. Gary Locke have been invited. It will be a big public conference. Ruckleshaus will be the luncheon speaker. Kind said we should strive to have something accomplished on the stewardship areas by the date of this conference.

Department of Natural Resources grant. Wood asked for authorization to submit an application to Dave Roberts of the DNR for a small-scale restoration project at Maylor's Marsh in Oak Harbor. The DNR would provide about \$15,000 and the Navy Seabees would provide an equivalent or greater match to clear as many of the pilings as possible and restore the beach to a more natural state. We would then watch for any sign of siltation or negative impact on the marina before going further. So this would be a pilot project that we hope would restore forage fish. **Motion carried to authorize Wood to apply for the \$15,000 DNR grant for Maylor's Marsh restoration. Motion by Kind, second by Behr, carried unanimously.**

Asia-Pacific Economic Conference. This was outstanding. Wood said he learned some surprising things. Last year South Korea paid its fishing fleet to bring in derelict gear – they collected 54,000 tons, compared to the 11 tons we've recovered. The Japanese and Koreans traded blame as to the source of the derelict gear on their beaches. The scientific part of our presentation to APEC was delivered by Jeff June, our project manager. Joe Schmidt and Wood explained how to start a derelict gear project with citizen volunteers and non-government funding, and the Asians were very interested in this. They were also interested in the use of divers to retrieve nets. The derelict gear the Asians have been recovering is what's floating on the surface. Wood said some Asian nations dump their trash at sea, in the most pristine part of the South Pacific. Wood said there is incredible interest in Asia in what to do about the problem of derelict gear. They like the NWSC approach of getting rid of the law about fault, to remove the disincentive to report lost gear.

Coastal America / US Navy diver training project. Wood is working with the Navy and Department of Defense to set up diver training so Navy explosive ordinance dive (EOD) teams could locate and recover derelict fishing gear. The Whidbey Island EOD team would be the lead and receive the first training. The Navy is interested in getting divers certified in activities that have a civilian value as well as a Navy application. This has the potential of preparing EOD divers for civilian work after they leave the Navy.

New Grant Application. Wood hopes to combine signage, Shore Stewards and stewardship areas in a grant application to the state Department of Fish and Wildlife. DFW is offering about \$700,000 for projects undertaken by volunteer individuals and organizations between July 1, 2004 and June 30, 2005.

Attendance. Campbell reminded MRC members that we are all volunteers who knew what we were agreeing to when we accepted a place on the committee. If some members find they are frequently unable to attend meetings, perhaps they should consider stepping aside so that someone else can take their place who will attend meetings. We have struggled lately to achieve quorums. The most embarrassing instance was in Freeland in November when we had a significant turnout of the public but no quorum. Campbell reminded members they can appoint an alternate to represent them if they know

they will be absent. This person cannot vote but does count toward a quorum. Sherman mentioned Pedersen, Bredensteiner and Roberts as three individuals who frequently attend and could serve as alternates.

Address list. Sherman asked Pedersen to compile an updated address list, including e-mail addresses, and distribute it to the members.

MRC vacant position. Sherman said he and Weber have talked about filling the commercial fishing position that is open on the committee and feel it might be interesting to have a representative of the mussel raft operation. Pedersen said he had also given Meehan the name of a commercial fisherman on the south end. Wood mentioned the publisher of the Northwest Dive News as another possible candidate. Sherman mentioned Al Carpenter as another possibility. Campbell mentioned Steve Raymond, a retired editor from the P-I.

Speakers' Bureau. Sherman said we need a speakers' bureau to coordinate more outreach opportunities. He noted that Wood has been handling this so far. Wood said he would be happy to continue. Wood mentioned he and Campbell are speaking March 10 to the Whidbey Island Flyfishing Club. Behr said he will schedule Wood for a presentation to Rotary on the stewardship areas in about two months, with an eye to possibly seeking Rotary financial help in promoting the areas.

Keystone Ferry Scoping. Sherman said he received a letter from an attorney who had noticed the MRC's letter to WSF in the newspaper. This attorney said if WSF proceeds with their plans, he'll sue them.

Scenic Byways. Kind said she attended a meeting on this last week. The people at this meeting were representative of Audubon, Beach Watchers and the native plant community. They're interested in attracting eco-tourists and people interested in history, as opposed to RV traffic which tends to be attracted by federal designation.

Executive Committee. Sherman said he will be forming an executive committee, which may help expedite some business at our regular meetings.

Salmon TAG. Bredensteiner reported the next Salmon TAG meeting is Feb. 10 in LaConner. Topics will be nearshore prioritization and updating the salmon strategy. She said Pedersen will be helping her with that. Any suggestions we'd like to see added to the salmon strategy should be forwarded to her. One of the reasons the strategy is being revised is because the Salmon Recovery Funding Board project list we create in Island County will be evaluated against that strategy. SRFB will award 65 percent of the project funds based on how our project list fits our strategy. The nearshore and estuary work will still be at the top of the tiered system. Creeks will be lower because we don't have any commercial runs in Island County. Wood asked whether the WRAC or the TAG will at some point have a ranking of desirable projects. Bredensteiner said the strategy as it stands now does rank sites in terms of their desirability for projects – the estuaries and creeks are ranked that way. The TAG will be looking to see if they can use the study that was done by Anchor Environmental to prioritize nearshore areas.

PSAT seed-money grants. Robyn DuPre reminded the group that seed grant funds for small projects are available through PSAT, and all it takes is a short, simple application.

Langley Explorer. Behr reported that his company, Alaska Unusual, is looking for an owner-operator to run The Langley Explorer tour boat in 2004. He said he is too busy to operate the Langley Explorer this year because of the demands of his main business, which is tours to Alaska. The boat is co-owned by Alaska Unusual and The Inn at Langley, and they would like to find an owner/operator locally who would lease the boat and keep it in service.

Adjournment: 6:03 pm. There being no further business, Sherman declared the meeting adjourned.

NEXT MEETING: 4-6 p.m., Wednesday, Feb. 18, 2003, Trinity Lutheran Church, Freeland. Jeanne Koenings of the Department of Natural Resources will talk about a proposal for geoduck aquaculture and distribute a survey to MRC members.