



Marine Resources

Committee

October 6, 2004

Approved Minutes

4:03 – 5:50 pm, Heller Road Firehall, Oak Harbor

www.islandcountymrc.org

PRESENT: Chair **Roger Sherman, Tom Campbell, Ian Jefferds, Dick Toft, Ken Urstad, Benye Weber, Bruce Wood**, Admin. Ass't. **Dan Pedersen.** **ALTERNATES:** Pedersen for El Sayed. **ABSENT:** Hi Bronson, Sayed El-Sayed, Phyllis Kind, Don Meehan, Rolf Seitle, Jeff Tate, Exec. Director **Gary Wood.**

VISITORS:

Rex Porter (speaker), Whidbey Watershed Manager, Island County Public Works.
Scott Pascoe, Langley, applicant for Puget Sound Action Team liaison position.
Nancy Waddell, Clinton, Maxwellton Salmon Adventure (MSA).
Jeanie McElwain, Clinton, MSA, Beach Watchers, assisting Porter with public education work.
Jerry Mingo, Island County Solid Waste, representing chemical collection facility.
Karen Lennon, district administrator, Whidbey Island Conservation District.
Mary Ellen Moses, saw newspaper article, interested in non-point pollution.
Bill Applegate, saw newspaper article, wanted to learn about non-point pollution.
Doug Shepherd, saw newspaper article, member Island County Parks Board and Trails Council.
Kyle Renninger, Oak Harbor, student, whose class studied Crescent Harbor estuary pollution
Rufus Rose, Clinton, real estate broker
Frank Roberts, Lagoon Point.

CALL TO ORDER: 4:03 pm, **Sherman** called the meeting to order. **QUORUM:** Declared. **AGENDA:** Adopted. **MINUTES** of 9-1-2004: Adopted. Motion by **Toft**, second by **Campbell**, no objections.

Summary of Decisions

NWSC draft goals and benchmarks. We will recommend to the NWSC that they add the words "private organizations" or "non-governmental organizations" to their proposed new Marine Water Quality benchmark.

Grant review committee. At our Oct. 20 meeting the group will make a decision about forming a grant review committee.

Five-year plan. At Sherman's request, Pedersen will draft some ideas for a five-year-plan. The Executive Committee will discuss the five-year plan when it meets at Sherman's home, Oct. 13 at 2 pm.

Executive Director's contract. MOTION CARRIED. The MRC directs Meehan to write a new contract for Gary Wood as executive director, using \$15,000 of NWSC grant funds.

An Analysis of Whidbey Island Non-Point Pollution Planning

Speaker: Rex Porter

Island County Public Works – Whidbey Watershed Manager

Porter defines non-point pollution as “diffuse” pollution. It is not something that flows from a pipe on someone’s land and involves applying for a permit. It could be something blowing in the wind or hydrocarbons dripping from cars on the highway. In many cases it must be managed through public education or best management practices (BMEs).

Porter explained he was hired this past year to look at the current status of Island County’s non-point pollution planning and compare the recommendations of a citizen study that was done on the north end of the island in 1997 with what was done on south and central Whidbey in 2003. His assignment was to compare the results of those two efforts from a planning perspective and do some interviewing and data collection to find out what’s been done since those plans were approved by the county commissioners.

Past: The impetus for citizen groups coming together to look at non-point pollution was WAC 412 and the Puget Sound Water Quality Plan – that’s what drove this effort. The community groups did not concern themselves with costs, affordability nor political practicalities. Their findings included a lot of wishes. The plan for South Whidbey and the plan for Camano came along a generation later than the North Whidbey plan, so their documents benefited from what was learned earlier. The North plan was approved by the county commissioners in 1997 and the South plan in 2003. Public Works is the lead entity for implementing these tasks, though it does not necessarily have the funding to do them. Part of Porter’s job is to search for grants. Typically, a grant might fund 75% of a project but require a 25% or greater match from county roads funds, which can present a real challenge to the budget.

Present: Our planning grants did not come with action dollars – what we received was planning money, not fix-it money. Our current evaluation is a mid-course audit, a work-in-progress. The Whidbey Island implementation grant is ongoing. About two years ago the county applied for a Department of Ecology grant to implement some residential actions, such as pet -waste education, realtor education, septic education, etc. Public Works is in the process right now of applying for additional funding in the next Department of Ecology funding cycle.

Lessons Learned and The Future: The citizen groups that did the planning did not constrain themselves by what they knew could be funded. As a result, many of the actions listed are not grant targets – there is no ready source of cash to fund them. This is not necessarily good nor bad – it’s simply the process that was followed. Also, the recommendations were not prioritized, and some were not described very clearly, so it is difficult years later to know what citizen groups had in mind. Our ability to help ourselves is only as good as the plans we make.

Porter distributed an 11x16, two-sided “WIE NPP Planning Action Items Tracker” summarizing the current status of Whidbey Island non-point pollution planning action tasks. Some are complete, some are in progress and others have not been started.

Chair’s report – Sherman

Oct. 29-30 NWSC Conference. Sherman reported we will be well represented at the Northwest Straits Commission’s fall training conference in Bow, at the end of October. Seven of our members are registered, plus Wood and Pedersen. If anyone else wishes to sign up they should do it quickly.

New member: Bruce Wood. Sherman invited Bruce Wood to tell the group about himself. Wood was appointed to the committee in late July. He applied after seeing the position publicized in the newspaper. Wood was raised in Seattle and has been a resident of Island County since 1967. He attended the University of Washington and studied forestry. He lives at Davis Landing near Strawberry Point and owns a yacht moored in Oak Harbor. As a Navy officer he flew the E-6. Wood owns a business in yacht consulting and has a Coast Guard master’s license. His son graduated from the University of

Washington in oceanography and works for the Department of Ecology. Wood said he is interested in enhancing and preserving the marine environment, which he thinks is a big concern to a many of those who use it. He is concerned about runaway growth on the island and some of its subtle, negative influences on the environment. He said he agrees that public education is probably the biggest influence we can exert on preserving and enhancing the environment.

NWSC draft goals and benchmarks. Sherman distributed copies of the draft goals and performance benchmarks the Northwest Straits Commission has developed for submission to Sen. Patty Murray as part of the Congressional reauthorization proposal. Sherman said he thinks the five benchmarks are a huge improvement. These would replace the original eight benchmarks with new ones that are very sensible and workable. Nancy Waddell commented that the Marine Water Quality benchmark does not incorporate any wording that would include watershed groups or nonprofit groups, such as Maxwelton Salmon Adventure, whose efforts may directly contribute. Toft suggested perhaps “private organizations” or “non-government organizations” could be added after “resource managers” in the first point under Marine Water Quality.

Retreat review. All agreed that last month’s retreat at Phyllis Kind’s home was a great success. Sherman said it clarified our priorities and will help us provide guidance to our leaders. In the area of failures and weaknesses, he cited especially El Sayed’s strong conviction we need to publish our data. Sherman said he was concerned to learn our data is not being used by the county, and he hopes we can form committees and organize ourselves to better use the talent of our group. In the time available at the retreat we did not get to drafting a five-year plan, but we will address this between now and the Oct. 20 meeting.

Frank Roberts commented that in reading the draft of the NWSC’s proposed goals and benchmarks, he can see that Island County MRC is not alone in struggling with the challenge of developing protocols for data and making it accessible for use. In the past, the NWSC has said it wanted to use science to decide what to do. Now they realize the science they have is not in a condition to be usable. So this is a new and very welcome goal they’ve set on their own initiative. “It surely reflects exactly what you just said.” Sherman agreed that this is our biggest challenge.

Maylor’s Marsh. Sherman commented that many on the committee also want to see something physical accomplished, and that Maylor’s Marsh may be the start of something truly significant in terms of a habitat for Chinook salmon.

County information systems. Toft commented that, getting back to data, the county is wrestling right now with what to do with its information systems. He said probably the best thing our committee has done to date is hire Doug Kelly to input our data. It is a step in the direction of having the data accessible. Karen Lennon commented that she sits on the county Salmon Technical Advisory Group (TAG) and is working with a University of Washington professor, Dave Bocamps, on gathering the available nearshore data for Puget Sound. Many scientists are working on these issues but the data is not readily available. Bocamps is preparing a white paper in an effort to accumulate the knowledge to date, as we know it. Lennon said she will keep this committee apprised of the progress.

Outreach to academia. Sherman said El Sayed has volunteered to use his university contacts to see if we can interest someone in working with our data. Whether this effort will be successful we don’t know, but it is important to explore it.

Committees. Sherman commented we need to tackle the question of committees – determine which ones we need while being careful not to create too many. He said Wood has asked for a committee to review grant proposals, provide feedback and ideas, and help determine which grants to pursue. At the last meeting we appointed individual members to serve as liaisons to the full MRC on specific projects and issues. Campbell said he believes the committee needs to set the overall direction for grant efforts and the Five-Year Plan is the ideal document to guide this. Sherman asked the committee to think about this and be prepared to make a decision about a grant review committee at the next meeting.

Five-year plan. Sherman said the Five-Year Plan will be at the top of the agenda for next Wednesday's meeting of the executive committee. He asked Pedersen to draft some suggestions for the five-year plan.

Wood's contract. Sherman pointed out Wood has been without a contract since the end of July. We've delayed action while waiting to see how much might be available to allocate to Wood's position from several grants he applied for, but none have been approved. The group earlier discussed allocating \$15,000 of NWSC administrative funds to Wood's position and \$5,000 to WSU Extension. **MOTION CARRIED. Motion by Campbell, second by Weber, passed unanimously: The MRC directs Meehan to write a new contract for Gary Wood as executive director, using \$15,000 of NWSC grant funds toward his position.**

Other business

Working with watershed landowners. Waddell reported that WSU Extension will sponsor a local site to receive a download of a satellite broadcast to help watershed landowners manage their lands in an environmentally-friendly way. This will be from 9-11 a.m., Tuesday, Nov. 16, in the Front Room at Bayview Cash Shore.

Whidbey Conservation District workshops. Lennon reported Whidbey Conservation District will hold a Fire Wise workshop in November to help the island community be more prepared for wildfire, since all of Whidbey Island is at risk. Next March the district will hold a horses for clear water workshop. A native plant sale is under way now. Information is available at www.whidbeycd.org.

Adjournment. There being no further business, Sherman declared the meeting adjourned at 5:50 pm.

Coming Events

Oct. 13, Wednesday, 2 pm, Executive Committee meets at Sherman's home.

Oct. 20, Wednesday, 2-4 pm, MRC regular meeting at Trinity Lutheran Church, Freeland. Speaker: Danelle Heatwole, Crescent Harbor marsh study.

Oct. 29-30, Friday-Saturday, NWSC conference at Skagit Casino, Bow exit from I-5.