



# Marine Resources

Committee

## February 2, 2005

Minutes

4:04 – 6:15 pm, Heller Road Firehall, Oak Harbor

[www.islandcountymrc.org](http://www.islandcountymrc.org)

**PRESENT:** Chair Phyllis Kind, Hi Bronson, Tom Campbell, Ian Jefferds, Don Meehan, Ken Urstad, Bruce Wood, Exec. Director Gary Wood, Admin. Ass't. Dan Pedersen. **ALTERNATES:** None.  
**ABSENT:** Sayed El-Sayed, Rolf Seitle, Jeff Tate, Benye Weber.

### VISITORS:

Rex Porter, Coupeville, Whidbey Watershed Project Manager.  
Linda Lyshall, Puget Sound Action Team.

**CALL TO ORDER:** 4:04 pm, Kind called the meeting to order. **QUORUM:** Declared. **AGENDA:** Adopted with the addition of a budget segment by Meehan and a Science Committee report by Jefferds. **MINUTES** of 1-09-2005: Adopted. Motion by Bronson, second by Urstad, carried unanimously.  
**CORRESPONDENCE:** Kind reported she had received a letter from People for Puget Sound asking us to coordinate with them again on spartina removal, but that our noxious weed people would prefer not to continue the arrangement.

### Summary of Decisions

**MRC project priorities.** The group voted to establish these priorities for the use of next year's \$50,000 of project funds from the Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC):

1. Updating and revising the Beach Watcher booklet, Getting to the Water's Edge, tying it to the stewardship areas and Shore Stewards.
2. Interpretive signage for the stewardship areas, tied to the booklet and Shore Stewards.
3. Volunteer / outreach coordination in support of fish-use assessment studies.
4. School curriculum outreach program related to marine science in collaboration with Maxwellton Salmon Adventure and Beach Watchers.
5. Community shellfish project.
6. Flatfish research.

**Creosote log removal.** The MRC voted to use \$10,000 of this year's project monies in support of creosote log removal at Ft. Casey State Park, dedicating \$8,000 to the park's use for log removal and \$2,000 to outreach efforts associated with the project.

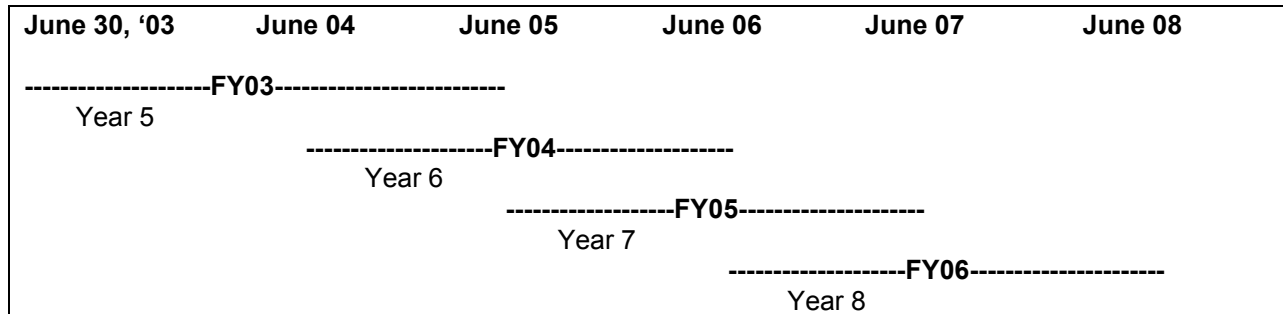
**Regional project priorities.** Because time was short, the discussion of regional project priorities was postponed until the next meeting.

### UPDATE ON WEST WHIDBEY JUVENILE SALMON SURVEY PROJECT BY MICAH WAIT, WASHINGTON TROUT

Wait explained Washington Trout is a private, non-profit organization that performs research, restoration and advocacy projects. They have received funding through the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) to carry out a project this year to study juvenile salmon use along the beaches, nearshore and pocket estuaries of west Whidbey Island. Considerable information exists about the east side of Whidbey

Island through the efforts of the Skagit River System Cooperative (SRSC), but little is known about the west side. The lack of data makes it difficult to put forward restoration projects on the west side. Washington Trout will use beach seines to sample at Swantown Marsh and beach, Crockett Lake, Hancock Lake, Lagoon Point, South Whidbey State Park, Deer Lagoon, the mouth of Maxwellton Creek and Cultus Bay. The use of a coded wire-tag wand will enable Washington Trout to identify the river-of-origin of any tagged fish. Sampling will start Feb. 14 and end Oct. 31. Wait said he would spend the fall working on the data and would publish a final report in about January or February of 2006. He hopes to obtain funding for at least one additional year of data collection.

## BUDGET



Meehan drew a chart on the blackboard and explained that "Fiscal Year 03" is a federal designation referring to the two-year period from June 30, 2003 through June 30, 2005. The MRC calls FY03 funds "Year 5 grants" or "Year 5 money." We have an FY04 grant (year 6) that ended Jan. 31, 2005, which we amended to bridge the gap from Feb. 1 - June 30, 2005. We designated \$15,000 for the executive director, \$5,000 for administration, \$10,000 for Shore Stewards, \$10,000 for stewardship areas and (originally) \$10,000 for Maylor's Marsh restoration, which we have redesignated for creosote removal. Starting this year the NWSC will award grants for two years. We will still have an annual budget, but will have two years in which to spend the funds.

## SCIENCE COMMITTEE REPORT – Jefferds

Kind shared a one-page handout of notes from Monday's Science Committee's meeting and invited Jefferds to summarize. The meeting's purpose was to consider priorities for the use of \$50,000 NWSC project funds, for which we need to submit a letter of intent.

### Local projects

- > Shore Stewards and Stewardship Areas. Jefferds said the committee felt we are not yet very far down the road with Shore Stewards and should do more to tie together Shore Stewards and the stewardship areas. He said this also was raised in Tuesday's Executive Committee meeting.
- > Shellfish seeding. The committee also discussed doing restorative seeding of shellfish beaches, perhaps tying it into a Shore Stewards project along the lines of a "community garden" project that brings people out and work together in taking care of the environment and becoming more knowledgeable.
- > Junior Beach Watchers. The committee also is interested in building on the success of the Beach Watcher program by taking it into the schools as Junior Beach Watchers. They feel a program in the schools might pay dividends by spreading the Beach Watcher message further among parents and encouraging more parents to become involved.
- > Derelict Gear. The committee feels more could be done within Island County to remove derelict gear and raise the profile of the project locally.

### Regional projects

- > Database and data access. The committee continues to feel that, regionally, we have a great need for a database to hold and organize the data that's been collected.
- > Shore Stewards
- > Junior Beach Watchers
- > Northern anchovies. Jefferds said Northern anchovies have been out-of-cycle for several decades and are now coming back heavily, and perhaps this should be examined along the lines of our forage fish project.

- > Oil spill preparedness throughout the counties.
- > Marine birds
- > Storm water. Jefferds said in his opinion storm water may be the biggest threat to the waters within our own MRC. Public Works is mapping the outfalls and culverts, and perhaps the MRC needs to learn more about this and do some public education.

Getting to the Water's Edge (booklet). In the midst of these discussions, Jefferds said Meehan showed up with a Beach Watcher booklet that needs to be updated and republished. Jefferds commented this booklet is an extremely impressive resource about Island County's public access points and the shoreline creatures. He feels reissuing it would be an excellent use of MRC funds and would constitute a valuable and useful deliverable. Jefferds said the group also feels informational kiosks would be an important project that could be tied in with Shore Stewards and the stewardship areas. Sites for kiosks might include Port of Coupeville, Double Bluff, Keystone Landing, Clinton Park, Cranberry Lake, Coronet Bay and others.

Campbell said he believes the printing cost of the book perhaps could be absorbed by sponsors, so that we would not have to spend a great deal on it. But kiosks would be expensive and \$50,000 might not go very far. They would have to be weather-proof and vandal-proof. Kind said we need a good graphic artist to design the message and that this will cost some money.

Regarding the book, Meehan clarified that it does not list all the public access points in Island County – it lists those that make the most sense. Some sites lack adequate parking or are unsuitable for other reasons. But the guide is now 10 years old – new access areas have been created and need to be added. Bike trail maps also need to be added because this adds to its usability. Eelgrass beds need to be mapped – kayakers want to know this. It also makes sense to add the stewardship area information and to update the marine creature guides with better graphics in color. Kind suggest including the island's important bird areas, which number about 12 or 14.

Priorities for next year's \$50,000 of NWSC project funds.

1. Booklet. **Motion by Campbell, second by Urstad, carried unanimously, to make our 1st priority to update and republish Getting to the Water's Edge.**
2. Interpretive signage. **Motion by Jefferds, second by Campbell, to make our 2nd priority the development of interpretive signage for the stewardship areas.**
3. Volunteer / outreach coordination in support of fish-use assessments. **Motion by Campbell, second by Jefferds, to make our 3rd priority volunteer/outreach coordination in support of fish use assessments. Carried. Voting in favor: 6. Opposed 0. Abstain: 1 (Meehan).**
4. School curriculum outreach program related to marine science. **Motion by Campbell, second by Jefferds, to make our 4<sup>th</sup> priority a collaboration with Maxwellton Salmon Adventure and Beach Watchers to develop a school curriculum outreach program related to marine science. Carried. Voting in favor: 6. Opposed 0. Abstain: 1 (Meehan).**
5. Community shellfish project. **Motion by Jefferds, second by Bronson, to make our 5<sup>th</sup> priority funding a community shellfish project on Camano and Whidbey islands. Carried unanimously.**
6. Flatfish. **Motion by Campbell, second by Bronson, to make our 6<sup>th</sup> priority to conduct a review of the literature to determine whether we should conduct a flatfish study.**

Because time was short, Kind recommended delaying the discussion of regional project priorities until our next meeting.

Creosote log removal. **Motion by Meehan, second by Urstad, to use \$10,000 of this year's NWSC monies in support of creosote log removal at Fort Casey State Park, dedicating \$8,000 to the park's use for log removal and \$2,000 to outreach efforts associated with the project. Voting In favor: 7. Voting against: 1 (Jefferds).** Meehan conceded he is not enthusiastic about creosote projects but feels we are obligated in this specific instance. He said it is clear that creosote is toxic and does pose a hazard to children who play on the logs, especially during hot summer conditions. Urstad added that we should also take into account the value of our working relationship with the Department of Natural Resources, with an eye to the future. Kind said there will be public relations benefits, too, if the log removal attracts coverage by the news media.

**COUNTY LEAD'S REPORT -- MEEHAN**

Kind appointed NWSC rep by BICC. Meehan reported the county commissioners appointed Kind as our MRC's representative to the Northwest Straits Commission for 2005, and appointed Joe Burcar as designated alternate to the MRC for Jeff Tate.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Kind declared the meeting adjourned at 6:15 pm.

### Coming Events

**Mar. 2, Wednesday, 4-6 pm: MRC meeting at Heller Road Firehall, Oak Harbor.**

**Mar. 16, Wednesday, 4-6 pm: MRC meeting at Trinity Lutheran Church, Freeland. Speaker: Jeanie McElwain, Freeland Water Quality Improvement Program.**