



Marine Resources

Committee

June 1, 2005

Minutes

4:03 – 5:45 pm, Heller Road Firehall
Oak Harbor

www.islandcountymrc.org

PRESENT: Chair Phyllis Kind, Hi Bronson, Tom Campbell, Ian Jefferds, Don Meehan, Rolf Seitle, Ken Urstad, Exec. Director Gary Wood, Admin. Ass't. Dan Pedersen. **ALTERNATES:** Joe Burcar (permanent alternate for Tate), Pedersen for Hillers, Bredensteiner for Weber. **ABSENT:** Joe Hillers, Sayed El-Sayed, Jeff Tate, Benye Weber.

VISITORS:

Kim Bredensteiner, Coupeville, Island County Salmon Recovery Program.
Doug Kelly, Island County hydrogeologist.

CALL TO ORDER: 4:03 pm, Kind called the meeting to order. **QUORUM:** Declared, including Burcar as permanent alternate for Tate, Pedersen as alternate for Hillers and Bredensteiner as alternate for Weber.

AGENDA: Adopted, with the addition of a presentation by Kelly. **MINUTES** of 5-18-2005: Adopted, motion by Bronson, second by Urstad, no objections.

CORRESPONDENCE

Partnering with SRSC. Wood reported he had been in communication with Skagit River System Cooperative (SRSC). Our MRC recently submitted a letter-of-intent for the next round of Salmon Recovery Funding Board grants to study potential protection and restoration sites on northeast Whidbey Island. Ours was one of 13 letters submitted, five of which were from SRSC. One of SRSC's letters proposed to do the same work as we proposed but over a larger area. After some discussion, rather than embark on the SRFB process with a parallel proposal, Wood communicated to SRSC that we would be a partner in SRSC's proposal, subject to the MRC's agreement tonight. SRSC would subcontract a portion of the work to us.

WSU Office of Grants and Research Development. Wood reported that some time ago we submitted two applications through the Washington State University (WSU) Office of Grants and Research Development. One of these was for a large educational program that did not get funded through the National Science Foundation. The other was for about \$47,000 to put Shore Stewards on a much more solid basis, hiring a full-time coordinator for Whidbey Island. Puget Sound Action Team would pitch in another \$3,000, for a total of \$50,000. Bob Simmons, liaison from the university to the Department of Ecology, wrote to Meehan saying the advisory committee has approved the Shore Stewards request. This is subject to approval by Ecology management, but this is expected to follow as a routine step.

Summary of Decisions

Camano Island Blueprint-Style Mapping Project: Motion by Campbell, second by Urstad, carried unanimously, to authorize Wood in consultation with the chair and county lead to develop costs and propose to the Northwest Straits Commission a Camano Island Blueprint-Style Mapping Project. This will incorporate Jim Johannessen's feeder bluff data, expert weighting of variables, and outreach.

PROGRAM

Doug Kelly

Island County Hydrogeologist

Meehan introduced Doug Kelly and explained that his presentation tonight is not on an MRC project but does make use of MRC data. This particular project was done to help the Camano Watershed Project identify some potential areas for restoration and protection. It combines MRC and Beach Watcher datasets into a tool to help identify project-related opportunities on Camano Island.

Kelly projected a computer image on the screen, explaining that this tool seeks to relate several different datasets, including eelgrass, shoreline hardening and forage fish data, along with a parcel layer. It is designed so that questions may be asked and the results ranked. The data may be displayed on a background of LIDAR data, USGS topographic background or “no background,” which Kelly pointed out is the easiest for viewing the actual data. Specific land parcels also may be overlaid. Kelly explained that this tool allows a scoring system to be applied to the data. Values are assigned to the data to reflect their positive or negative impact on protection or restoration potential, and this is an area in which the MRC may be of considerable help. Obviously, whatever weighting is assigned to characteristics of the data will affect the resulting scores, and there is room for thoughtful manipulation. For example, as a general rule bulkheads are a negative influence on marine life. But from the standpoint of potential for restoration, an old, failing bulkhead is a positive – more positive than a new bulkhead – because the owner of a failing bulkhead presumably would be more receptive to removal than the owner of a newly-built bulkhead.

Wood pointed out that \$10,000 is available to Island County MRC from the Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) to apply to one of three regional projects – the Bay’s Blueprint, shellfish or eelgrass. Wood said he, Kind and Meehan talked about Kelly’s work. With MRC approval, they would like to propose to the NWSC a Camano Island Blueprint-Style Mapping Project. In his draft proposal to the NWSC, Wood explains that the MRC is accumulating comprehensive datasets of marine resources utilized by Doug Kelly. In an innovative Access-based application this software program enables each resource, (e.g. eelgrass) or feature (e.g. hardened shoreline elements) to be assigned variable values in a scoring system for shoreline segments. Each segment is identified with a real property parcel. This opportunity enables Jim Johannessen’s feeder bluff data to be incorporated into this system. Wood would like to assemble an expert consulting committee to discuss and weight a series of variables.

Motion by Campbell, second by Urstad, carried unanimously, to authorize Wood in consultation with the chair and county lead to develop costs and propose to the Northwest Straits Commission a Camano Island Blueprint-Style Mapping Project. This will incorporate Jim Johannessen’s feeder bluff data, expert weighting of variables, and outreach.

Executive Director’s Report -- Wood

Wood reported he spoke recently about Shore Stewards to about two dozen members of the Old Goats on South Whidbey and enrolled several of them in Shore Stewards. He said the group gave him a good reception.

On June 8 he will present Shore Stewards to the Port of Coupeville and he expects to enroll the port in Shore Stewards.

County Lead’s Report – none

Chair’s Report – Kind

Bluff Bird Project. This project is off the ground and Kind said she hopes to soon have all the data for mapping by Bredensteiner.

\$86,000 Northwest Straits regional project. Kind said at the last NWSC meeting every MRC offered suggestions of where they’d like the \$86,000 spent. There was no decision and no consensus.

NEW BUSINESS

July-August meeting dates. The MRC will meet once in July and once in August -- July 13 in Oak Harbor and August 10 in Freeland. Kind will confirm the meeting locations, since Heller Road Firehall may not be available.

Signage opportunity with Beach Watchers. Kind pointed out that the Beach Watchers are working on an educational exhibit on Coupeville Wharf. Pedersen will ask Sarah Schmidt whether we can promote the marine stewardship areas in this exhibit.

Passenger Vessel Virus Study. Jefferds reported he attended, as a representative of the shellfish industry association, a recent meeting in Olympia relating to viral and bacterial pollution from Alaska-bound passenger vessels discharging sewage into Puget Sound waters. The State Department of Health has a memorandum of understanding with the cruise lines, and a bill currently is pending that would put impose some new restrictions. Jefferds said the large cruise lines were represented at the meeting but representatives of the small passenger vessels declined to attend. Based on information presented at the meeting, Jefferds said the large cruise lines do not appear to pose a concern. They use the Advanced Waste Water Treatment System (AWTS), which appears to reduce bacterial and viral effluent levels to such low levels that, once discharged into the ship's wake, the resulting contamination is negligible. Furthermore, the AWTS discharge occurs in shipping lanes where there are not any existing shellfish farms or commercial or C&S Tribal beds. Jefferds said it appears to him that the real concern for shellfish growers is the smaller cruise ships that are not covered by the memorandum of understanding and that are not using AWTS for their waste.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Kind declared the meeting adjourned at 5:45 pm.

Coming Events

June 15, Wednesday, 4-6 pm, MRC meets at Trinity Lutheran Church, Freeland.

Speaker: Jim Johannessen

July 13, Wednesday, 4-6 pm, MRC meets in Oak Harbor – location to be announced.

Aug. 10, Wednesday, 4-6 pm, MRC meets at Trinity Lutheran Church, Freeland.