



Marine Resources

Minutes

February 1, 2006

3:58 – 6:12 pm, Heller Road Firehall, Oak Harbor

www.islandcountymrc.org

PRESENT: Chair **Phyllis Kind, Hi Bronson, Joe Burcar** (permanent alternate for Tate), **Tom Campbell, Joe Hillers, Don Meehan, Dick Toft, Ken Urstad, Benye Weber**, Executive Director **Gary Wood**, Admin. Ass't. **Dan Pedersen**. **ALTERNATES:** None. **ABSENT:** **Ian Jefferds, Rolf Seitle, Jeff Tate**.

VISITORS: **Scott Chase**, Camano Island, coordinator, Island County Shore Stewards (speaker); **Kristin Cooley**, new coordinator, WSU Beach Watchers; **Kim Bredensteiner**, Coupeville, Island County Salmon Recovery Program; **Nancy Waddell**, Maxwelton Salmon Adventure.

CALL TO ORDER: 3:58pm. **QUORUM:** Declared. **AGENDA:** Adopted, with the addition of a report from Joe Burcar on the draft water quality monitoring plan. **MINUTES** of 1-18-2006: Adopted. Motion by Bronson, second by Hillers, no objections. **CORRESPONDENCE:** Wood said we've been notified of acceptance of our pre-proposal and have been invited to submit a full proposal to National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's (NFWF) Puget Sound Marine Conservation Fund for restoration opportunities in Jim Johannessen's shoreline evaluation.

SPEAKER

Island County Shore Stewards

Scott Chase, Coordinator

History and lessons learned. Shore Stewards was started toward the end of 2002 by Meehan and Wood, borrowing and adapting from the Backyard Wildlife Habitat program. But there are also differences. Backyard Wildlife Habitat certifies properties, but Shore Stewards certifies both properties and persons, because shoreline-dwelling families sometimes share a vacation house or belong to communities with shared beach access. During 2003 there was some turnover in the leadership and in 2004 Chase agreed to take over, having been involved in the original group on Camano that put it together and carried out the pilot program. At the beginning of 2005 Shore Stewards expanded to Whidbey Island and also to Hood Canal through Jefferson County WSU Extension, serving three counties and having a coordinator. This year Whatcom, Snohomish, Skagit and Clallam counties are working together on a PIE grant application to introduce Shore Stewards. If they are successful, or even if they aren't, it will become a regional program – the Shore Stewards book and website will become regional, with local content. Puget Sound Action Team also is helping. He emphasized there will be no sharing of the mailing list – Shore Stewards is protective of members' confidentiality.

Changes in the application. The original application had eight pages and called for photographs and diagrams of people's property. This required so much time and effort to complete that many people took it home and put it aside forever. Also, the *Guide for Shoreline Living* was mailed out with the application, which eliminated the greatest incentive people had for completing the app. There was no ongoing follow-up. Chase shortened the application to four pages but it was still too long. He then shortened it to a card that can be filled out on the spot, and that he can use to enroll someone over the telephone.

The old app is now a survey. This doesn't mean enrollees get off without providing information about themselves, but now they do it later, rather than at the time of enrollment. Chase adapted the old application to a survey, which he sends them after they've been in the program for a while. They fill it

out and send it back, and then he sends them the *Guide for Shoreline Living* – the book, which is the big item most people want. The survey makes it possible to measure and see what people have learned.

The newsletter. Early in 2004 Chase started the newsletter as a means of keeping in touch and sharing helpful information. He said many of the newsletter topics are brought up by Shore Stewards who call him or write with questions. He gets calls and comments from people after each issue wanting to talk about what's in the newsletter, and he finds the newsletter is passed along and circulated widely.

Marketing the program. Chase prefers talking to smaller groups. Large meetings provide too little opportunity to engage audience members one-on-one. He speaks to service clubs, homeowners' associations, community events and workshops. Sound Gardening workshops on Camano have provided a good opportunity. Camano 101 provides an excellent opportunity, and Whidbey 101 will do the same, with many environmentally-related organizations attending and participating. It's an especially popular way for new residents of the county to learn about living here.

How Chase engages prospects. Chase often sets up a tri-fold table-top display. It includes one panel that is quite crowded with information and illustrations so passers-by need to come closer to study it. Once they get close and start to read, Chase can start a conversation. He is currently working on a three-dimensional, papier-mâché model like a railroad setup, which will enable him to demonstrate some points about bluffs and beaches.

What puts people off. Time-commitments. People are afraid of more meetings. They belong to too many committees; their job takes too much time; they are afraid of having to go through training; afraid of having to give more volunteer time, etc. The beauty of the program is that it is strictly educational – there are no meetings, no volunteer time, no training. All they have to do is open their minds or be receptive to learning about the property they live on. Fear of their name being marketed. People don't like signing up and then finding they are receiving a lot of new mailings from other organizations, so he assures them their name won't be marketed. Fear of shame about past poor practices. Some people are afraid that in enrolling they must reveal that they have been doing the wrong thing for a long time. Chase puts them at ease, saying his purpose is not to make them change something they're doing but just to ask them to consider doing things differently.

What works well. The booth, the newsletter, lots of handouts and brochures, the website, book and the metal sign. Chase hears from people in distant places who found out about the program from the website. Someone from New Jersey wrote about wanting to start up a similar program there. The book is a great asset – it's what people want. The newsletter gets passed around. The short app enables Chase to take apps over the phone. Workshops and classes work well to grow the program.

Is Shore Stewards restricted to saltwater and to those who live on the water's edge? Shore Stewards is available to people who live along the shore seasonally, and to those who live upland in shoreline communities whose activities impact the shore. On Hood Canal the program is open to those who live along streams and rivers. Based on input received at the Salmon Technical Advisory Group (TAG) meeting and this meeting, Chase thinks we should broaden the program to include those who live along streams and lakes in Island County. Meehan point out that salmon habitat extends not only along the nearshore but into stream areas as well.

Strategies to grow Shore Stewards on Whidbey. Newspaper articles, workshops, classes, networking with other organizations, Sound Waters University, placing phone calls to Beach Watchers who live along the shoreline, new brochures such as the MRC's stewardship area brochures.

Current enrollment. About 180-some. Meehan commented the program has been slow to gain numbers, but Chase is working hard and he is optimistic the numbers will come. He is also pleased that it is growing throughout Puget Sound.

Island County Draft Water Quality Monitoring Plan

Joe Burcar, Shoreline Planner

Burcar distributed copies of the county's draft Water Quality Monitoring Plan and photocopies of the ordinance that will implement the program. He said the county is in the midst of its wetlands review right now as part of the update of the Critical Areas Ordinance. This program does not monitor any marine areas or shellfish beds. However, the plan recommends locating monitoring points as close to pocket

estuaries/shellfish areas as possible in an effort to detect any potential upland pollutant sources to marine waters. He pointed out that marine waters are a state responsibility – adding that the county discussed monitoring the marine areas, but there are many technical concerns with the dynamic tidal influence that limit the ability to source pollutants and add to the costs and technical training required for sampling. Also the plan is intended to be comprehensive monitoring countywide. With a limited budget, sampling within marine areas will have to be grant funded. This is something the plan recommends doing, but the county cannot afford it initially. It is reasonable to assume that surface water pollutants would make their way toward estuaries.

This report was motivated by the work being done currently on the agriculture ordinance, but has since become broader and more independent. The water quality component initially was part of that and was pulled together within several months. State agencies – Ecology, and Fish & Wildlife – requested that the water quality section be pulled out of the ag ordinance to become an independent program. The intent is not just to deal with existing agriculture and the ag ordinance, but to serve the purposes of several county agencies including Public Works and Health, the tribes and state agencies, as well as the Critical Areas Ordinance. So the water quality monitoring program should not be viewed narrowly as relating only to the ag ordinance.

In looking at creating a comprehensive program that included both ground water and surface water, the county recognized that the Health Department's program is viewed as a model for the state. It is well documented. Many of the water quality standards are different between ground water and surface water. Halfway through this effort the two were separated. The ground water program remains on its own and this program is more specific to surface water – nonpoint pollution.

This report characterizes watersheds in the county as to development, agricultural areas, septic system locations, etc. It assigns each watershed to a category and weighs it in terms of risks and values. Risks include potential pollution sources such as agriculture, development and septic systems. Values include salmon streams, wetlands and other natural features. The report recognizes eight different geomorphic groups – different characterizations of land types in the county, identifying these by agriculture, natural or undisturbed area and the highest potential for development.

They then prioritized the list to determine which areas need to be studied first to establish a baseline – which areas are representative to study over a five-year period to establish appropriate standards for Island County? In the first year of the program they will study 21 reconnaissance sites where little information exists, plus 24 baseline sites—eight apiece in the natural category, eight in the developed category and eight in the agricultural category. These 24 baseline sites will be monitored for five years in an effort to compensate for natural variations such as El Nino years. This is essentially the “control” area. But after year one, monitoring will expand to other sites to track the sourcing in an effort to identify where problems may be and what their causes might be.

Burcar said the plan really serves two purposes – to set a protocol for long-term water quality monitoring throughout the county and to determine how well regulations are working in agricultural areas, developed areas, etc. This is the adaptive management component.

Burcar said the plan now is in the 60-day comment period, until March 18, and comments are welcome from anyone. Public workshops are scheduled in the Hearing Room on Feb. 6 and 27 and he will send the schedule to Pedersen for e-mailing to the MRC. Meehan pointed out this surface water monitoring program has a lot to do with the MRC's marine water concerns, since the upland areas are a source of pollution that flows into the estuarine habitat. He said the MRC does not have much water-quality data to help it understand what's happening. He said he thinks we should have a major discussion on this.

PROJECT REPORTS

Shore Stewards. Meehan commented Washington State University (WSU) still does not have the contract that will fund the majority of Chase's position. Regarding the program's slow growth in numbers, Toft commented he doesn't think we should feel disappointed – he thinks it will grow exponentially as neighbors talk to neighbors.

Water's Edge book. Meehan shared a "comp" of the book Stacey Neumiller put together to give potential sponsors a sense of the look and feel of the book. Kind asked whether the project will be completed in this budget year, by June 30. Pedersen said it might, but it's a close call. Meehan said he doubts it. Kind said we may need to allocate some additional funds to it in our next budget.

Water quality. Meehan said he is still working with Jefferds and the Coast Guard to supply coordinates for the planned location of the water quality buoy. Hillers expressed frustration, saying "We are high-centered." Meehan said we're still moving ahead, pointing out the Port of Coupeville is installing the yard-arm that will hold our antenna so we'll have communication between the buoy and the receiver at the port facility. Hillers said he hopes we can get information from this buoy that is comparable to what the surface water monitoring program will be doing. "This will be a piece of the picture we just don't have right now," he said. Hillers said he will meet with Rex Porter on Feb. 16 to get a better understanding of this subject.

Data mapping. Kind said she assumed we now have the information we need to go forward. Meehan asked whether anyone knew if the county had completed GIS mapping of shoreline parcels. Burcar said he does not believe this has been completed. Bredensteiner said Doug Kelly might be able to work with the existing GIS data, depending on exactly what he needs. Kind and Wood agreed we can still go forward with inviting outside experts to look at what we have and give us some recommendations.

Pigeon guillemots. Kind and Frances Wood attended a meeting last week organized by Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife, bringing together people in the area doing studies on pigeon guillemots. Wood and Kind are leaving tomorrow for a week-long course on seabirds. Wood has written a small grant proposal to state Audubon for "gas money" to survey pigeon guillemots next summer by boat.

Shoreline signage. Pedersen reported the Education & Outreach Subcommittee met just prior to this meeting and made good progress. Those attending were [Carol Triplett](#), Friends of Camano Island Parks; [Scott Chase](#), Island County Shore Stewards; [Nancy Waddell](#), Maxwelton Salmon Adventure; and three representatives of the Marine Resources Committee – [Pedersen](#), [Wood](#) and [Toft](#). The committee agreed that the MRC should design and furnish the display panels and that local partners should pay for, install and own the hardware installations. These partners might be community organizations, parks departments or port districts, for example. The committee agreed that the next steps should be to identify a graphic designer and produce a prototype of the sign panels for organizations to look at and consider.

Derelict gear. Meehan said he reminded the NWSC that \$20,000 had been earmarked in their budget for removal of derelict gear in Island County waters.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

MRC vacancies. Meehan said he has received two inquiries so far – interesting people -- generated by the article Pedersen sent to Island County newspapers. The article has not yet appeared in the Stanwood-Camano News. In addition, Jefferds has approached Vin Waldron and Kind is approaching Johnny Palka.

NEW BUSINESS

Tom Cowan to leave NWSC. Kind reported she had just received a letter on e-mail indicating that Tom Cowan has announced plans to resign from the NWSC after a replacement can be found.

Project ideas for NWSC Funding in 2006-2007

Kind explained the following funds will be available in our next grant from the Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) and invited members to suggest how we should use them.

A --\$10,000 MRC administration

B – \$38,000 Optional tasks (previously \$30,000)

Workplan preparation, developing and preparing grant proposals, programmatic staff support, project monitoring, performance tracking, education programs, fund-raising.

C -- \$55,000 MRC projects (previously \$50,000)

D -- \$30,000 Regional project (previously \$70,000 divided among seven MRCs).

The following ideas were mentioned:

Water's Edge book – additional funding to complete the project

Shore Stewards

Data mapping

Stewardship Area signage – additional funding to help complete signage and work with more partners.

Pigeon guillemot study

Kelp bed survey

Compile marine water quality data. Bredensteiner pointed out the existing data on marine water quality have never been compiled for analysis. If we'd like to create a marine water quality monitoring plan along the lines of the county's recently-released draft fresh water monitoring plan, the first step would be to pull together and map the existing data from the Department of Health, Department of Ecology, Beach Watchers and other sources. The MRC water quality buoy would be one source of data, but there would also be other pieces.

Support the Beach Watchers' beach monitoring program. Meehan commented 90 Beach Watcher volunteers are collecting intertidal data and there is nothing like it in Puget Sound. The Seattle Aquarium is now partnering with Beach Watchers and has adopted our protocol. The Washington Department of Fisheries (WDFW) and Canadian scientists have joined us in The Salish Sea Consortium. Kind said she would support this *only* if the data were entered into a database. Meehan said big strides have been made in getting this into an Access Database.

Upgrade MRC website and hire webmaster. Meehan pointed out our website is stagnant and needs work to reflect our projects and activities of the last few years. He suggested this might be a project for Pedersen. He pointed out the Beach Watcher website is getting 50,000 hits a month and Admiralty Head Lighthouse is getting 40,000. A surprisingly large number are from Island County. He is trying to move the MRC website out of the WSU server so we can use Web Trends to track it as he does the other websites. Kind commented we need a webmaster to keep our site updated and current.

Dedicated laptop for MRC Science Committee. Bredensteiner said it would help greatly if the MRC could have a dedicated laptop on which to install Arc Info and Arc Reader software. This would enable us to manipulate data and create a CD Rom with data maps for the MRC to review. Currently, we are limited by having to use other county employees' computers when we wish to work with this software.

Shoreline processes brochure. Bredensteiner shared a brochure published by the North Olympic Salmon Coalition (NOSC) that discusses drift cells and healthy shorelines, and how shoreline processes affect forage fish. She said she hears many comments about this brochure -- people feel they really learn from it -- and suggested we create a similar brochure. We could use it as a model and add what we've learned about feeder bluffs and pigeon guillemots, for example, perhaps including a map of Jim Johannessen's data about Island County, and some good graphics.

Orca Network data collection. Meehan suggested giving some support to The Orca Network's whale-tracking program, perhaps in developing a data base.

Partner on a restoration project. Campbell suggested finding a partner and tackling a restoration project.

Review the Johannessen data for restoration project ideas. Bredensteiner said she would be glad to lead a discussion of this at the next meeting.

Regional project ideas

Regional Shore Stewards. Kind said all the MRCs seem to like Shore Stewards.

Regional oil spill training.

Regional Beach Watchers. Now that Beach Watchers is expanding into other counties, it might be appropriate to devote some regional project funding to it.

LEADERSHIP REPORTS

Executive Director's Written Report, distributed before the meeting by e-mail:

2006 MRC Grant

The award of \$1.4MM by Congress for the next fiscal year was budgeted by the commission this month. This year's grant round – available July 1 – will include these components:

A. MRC admin/travel	\$ 10,000 (NO CHANGE)
B. MRC Staff/grant writing/educ	38,000 (\$8,000 increase)
C. MRC projects	55,000 (\$5,000 increase)
TOTAL	\$103,000 (\$13,000 +)

Friday, 1/27, the MRC's Executive Committee discussed the available options for this year's proposal. First, the full committee should evaluate existing projects and programs and determine which are to receive continued and additional funding in 2006-2007. Shore Stewards, the signage project, and water quality are examples to be considered. Additionally, new benchmark-driven start-up projects must be identified and designed, such as the pigeon guillemot surveys, kelp bed mapping, and on-the-ground restoration sites. MRC members are encouraged to suggest new ideas for this funding.

In addition to the MRC allocation, the commission set aside \$30,000 for regional projects this year – and voted on regional preferences. The *Shore Stewards* program was the top selection this year. The new budget also includes \$20,000 for MRC training, to include science training; and \$30,000 for media relations, brochures, etc. The latter three items are to be administered at the commission level, but our input is highly recommended as these are additional sources to fund particular products for our own programs.

Pre-Proposal Success

The MRC applied to the SeaDoc Society for a grant to fund Whidbey Audubon Society's continued pigeon guillemot surveys, but it was not among the two projects funded. This ongoing work merits serious consideration as an MRC project for 2006-07.

In contrast, the MRC's pre-proposal to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's (NFWF) "Puget Sound Marine Conservation Fund" resulted in a request for our full proposal – due 3/17. This is an important opportunity, and is designed to undertake and perform specific restoration actions identified in the 2004-05 Johannessen shoreline evaluation. I will circulate drafts of the full proposal for MRC input.

A full application was submitted in the Puget Sound Action Team's 2006 PIE round to expand Shore Stewards into Whatcom, Skagit, Snohomish and Clallam counties through the Straits Foundation. New funding sources remain under investigation for opportunities re our other prioritized MRC issues.

Interim Project Progress Reports

In the next week MRC project leaders will receive a template from me to update the status of each task. I will include monies spent to date and unspent balances that we are targeting to use by 6/30. Your prompt return of the forms is urged so they may be incorporated into formal reports to the Department of Ecology – as grant deliverables. I will then circulate these reports back to all of you.

I have commenced scheduling the Data Management task group's meetings to undertake evaluation of our survey datasets for use in identification of conservation and restoration sites, and ranking in accordance with feasibility. This work ties in well with our NFWF full proposal, thankfully.

The signage committee will also meet this date, and the seining schedule begins next week. MRC members will enjoy volunteering for these tasks, as they allow you to get wet, or get something built.

Financial Report

Don has circulated an updated 2005-06 MRC budget. The year-end expenditures are not finalized at WSU, and I will meet with Jim Clark next week to ascertain total sums spent by category, and thereafter provide project leaders with the balances described above. It is safe to say that several projects may expect to make commitments soon to use their budgets timely – although we do not lose the funding June 30th, we are planning on that as a spend-out target.

Gary Wood, Executive Director

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Kind declared the meeting adjourned at 6:12 pm.