



Marine Resources

Minutes

February 15, 2006

4:05 – 6:00 pm, Trinity Lutheran Church, Freeland

www.islandcountymrc.org

PRESENT: Chair **Phyllis Kind**, **Tom Campbell**, **Joe Hillers**, **Ian Jefferds**, **Rolf Seitle**, **Dick Toft**, **Ken Urstad**, Executive Director **Gary Wood**, Admin. Ass't. **Dan Pedersen**. **ALTERNATES:** Kim Bredensteiner for Weber.
ABSENT: **Hi Bronson**, **Don Meehan**, **Jeff Tate**, **Benye Weber**.

VISITORS: **Kim Bredensteiner**, Coupeville, Island County Salmon Recovery Program; **Nancy Waddell**, Maxwelton Salmon Adventure; **John Ziemer**, candidate to fill MRC science vacancy.

CALL TO ORDER: 4:05 pm. Past-chair, Campbell, called the meeting to order in the absence of Kind and Jefferds, both of whom arrived about 4:30. **INTRODUCTIONS:** **John Ziemer** introduced himself as a candidate for the science position on the board. He is new to the island and said he has reviewed our Website and is very interested. His background is in science, with a double-major in zoology and botany. He has worked at Wood's Hole Institute, Massachusetts, and currently is working in management as a medical technologist in a hospital lab. **QUORUM:** Declared, with Bredensteiner as alternate for Weber. **AGENDA:** Adopted. Bredensteiner will lead a discussion of restoration opportunities identified in the Johannessen feeder-bluff study. **MINUTES** of 2-01-2006: Adopted with sentence deleted at Pedersen's request. Motion by Hillers to approve the minutes as corrected; second by Toft, 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.

SUMMARY OF DECISIONS

North Whidbey restoration opportunities. Kim Bredensteiner will lead a discussion at our March 1 meeting on North Whidbey restoration opportunities identified in Jim Johannessen's research, which could be included in a full grant proposal to the National Fish & Wildlife Foundations Puget Sound Marine Conservation Fund.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

MRC vacancies. Pedersen reported that Stacey Neumiller in Meehan's office had referred a caller to him who is interested in our science position. He is Mike Ganzini, formerly of Bellingham, who recently retired from the Tesoro refinery and is building a home on Whidbey Island. Ganzini is living in a recreational vehicle at Mutiny Bay while his house is completed. Pedersen said he gave Ganzini the address of the MRC website and explained that he would need to write a letter to the county commissioners expressing his interest and qualifications, and send a copy of the letter to Meehan.

Johannessen data discussion. Bredensteiner introduced a discussion of potential restoration projects for inclusion in our full grant proposal to the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation's (NFWF) Puget Sound Marine Conservation Fund. Wood submitted a pre-application in November and we have now been invited to submit a full proposal. This is encouraging because once NFWF accepts a pre-proposal, it usually goes ahead and awards the full grant. Our pre-application was for \$222,475, proposing to identify specific projects from the list of possibilities itemized during Jim Johannessen's feeder bluff research. Examples are the removal of concrete rubble and derelict bulkheads to improve forage fish spawning habitat, and to remove old pilings. Bredensteiner suggested we emphasize restoration over conservation opportunities. Most of the grant talks about restoration and she thinks that's where we should focus.

Within the restoration piece, she suggests we assign top priority to sites posing acute problems to forage fish habitat. So our approach would be to look for places where we could remove old boat ramps or rails, derelict bulkheads and pilings that are impacting eelgrass beds and causing herring mortality. A secondary piece that should be happening along with prioritization of sites is looking at bulkheads that are impacting the erosion of feeder bluffs. Bredensteiner said this is more of a process and will take time, but that our initial focus should be on acute problem areas. One piece of the grant is for outreach, which includes seeking landowner permission.

Toft asked whether funds from this grant might be applied to the Crescent Harbor project, which is well along but may be running out of funds for the last critical piece, which is to breach the dike and reconnect the marsh to tidal influence. He said this holds great potential for juvenile Chinook. Bredensteiner said it might be a mistake to add Crescent Harbor to this particular application, since it is quite different from the list NFWF approved in our pre-proposal. However, other sources of funding exist to complete the Crescent Harbor work. She suggested the Department of Transportation mitigation database – opening up Crescent Harbor marsh fits nicely within their mitigation efforts.

Wood pointed out removing the old Cama Beach boat ramp might be a candidate for inclusion in this project, since every square foot of the beach is used for spawning. We nearly got to this project before, but problems of timing prevented it.

Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) action grant. Kind said she spoke with Tom Cowan today and clarified that the grant we are receiving this July must be spent by June 30, 2007, even though we had two years in which to spend the money we received in last year's grant. After this, we will have two years in which to spend future grant funds. Kind suggested the executive committee meet next week to set up a budget, but that for today's purposes we establish whether we need to add funds to any of our current projects before talking about adding new projects.

Existing Projects

Funding needed:

Yes. Water's Edge book. Pedersen said Meehan has received commitments so far of about \$10,000 to use toward printing, and Pedersen suggests allocating another \$10,000 of NWSC grant funds in case we cannot find additional printing sponsors.

No? Estuary seining project. Urstad said we should ask Meehan whether funding is needed for Beach Watcher coordination. Otherwise, as far as he knows, the project is adequately funded. Wood said the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has multi-year funding for it.

No? Water quality. Hillers said no additional funding is needed for water quality unless we define a new or expanded project.

Yes. Signage. Pedersen said it is hard at this point to even estimate the cost of graphic design for this project, but he recommends adding to the \$15,000 currently budgeted.

Yes. Shore Stewards. Wood said the money to fund Scott Chase's position as full time is coming from two sources, one of which is this Northwest Straits action grant. We have always contemplated he would be part of this grant. Toft reported the Board of Island County Commissioners today approved expanding Chase's position from .5 FTE to 1.0.

Yes. Data analysis. Wood said he does not believe we need to apply our local funds to this, since it is going to be an NWSC regional project with regional funding. But Bredensteiner said she recommends the MRC buy a dedicated laptop computer for storing, displaying and downloading the data we have collected. Wood recommends including a projector.

??? Bluff birds. Kind pointed out that Wood submitted a proposal to Sea-Doc that we did not get. We observed few juveniles this year and we think we need to get offshore to count them, since they fledge at night and swim offshore. The state Audubon Society has agreed to provide gas money for us to use a volunteer's boat to go offshore and count the juveniles on either side of the boat. The other part of the grant was to purchase a pole-mounted Cheeper Peeper camera for looking inside the cliffside burrows.

This would be about \$5,000, and Kind says the question we need to consider is whether it's worth \$5,000 to look inside a few burrows. Wood said it would be significant to determine whether the breeding population is collapsing or whether predators or some other issue is causing the reduction in birds observed.

New project ideas

No. Kelp bed survey. Bredensteiner said the Department of Natural Resources probably will be surveying the main part of Puget Sound soon, so it may not make sense for us to hire a contractor to conduct a survey.

??? Become involved in Keystone Ferry deliberations. Jefferds asked whether we, as a group, want to do anything to influence the discussion of the Keystone Ferry terminal project. He asked whether the decision-makers have a good body of information with which to work.

No. Derelict gear. Wood thinks plenty of regional money is available for this without diverting funds from our local budget. Bredensteiner said we should stay in contact so projects actually do get done in Island County waters.

No. Creosote. This also is a regional project.

Yes. Compile marine water quality data. Bredensteiner suggests we should compile the last 20 – 30 years of data collected by the state and by the county health department. This probably could be done for under \$10,000 on a six-month contract with an environmental consulting firm, and would give us a basis for determining where we want to study water quality and what we want to ask in the future.

??? Town of Coupeville boat dock. Jefferds suggested the MRC consider funding the boat dock for the Town of Coupeville, which has not had a functioning boat dock for three years. Bredensteiner said she thinks she read that the town was going to reinstall it soon.

Yes. Support the Beach Watchers' monitoring effort. Bredensteiner said she understands someone is working on digitizing the data, but does not know how far they have gotten.

Yes. Upgrade the MRC website and hire a webmaster.

Yes. Orca Network data collection. Susan Berta has indicated that a laptop computer would be a big help to The Orca Network's data-collection work.

Project Selection for NFWF Grant. Bredensteiner will lead a discussion at the next MRC meeting of recommended restoration sites on North Whidbey.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

LEADERSHIP REPORTS

Chair – Kind

Keystone derelict gear removal. Kind reported she was on the boat with Jeff June on Friday when a derelict aquaculture net was removed at Keystone. Kind took photos and Wood submitted an article to the Whidbey News-Times, which was published in today's newspaper.

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

Derelict Gear Recovery

Jeff June forwards this summary of last week's work: On this last project we did four days of diver removal work (Feb 7-10) and removed 32 separate gillnets and two crab rings from Island and San Juan counties. The nets removed covered 7.8 acres on the seabed. We found a variety of animals entangled in the nets including the relatively rare Puget Sound king crab, red fur crab, Tanner crab, granular claw crab, red rock crab, longhorn decorator crab, five sea birds, lingcod, dogfish, rockfish and a number of fish too decomposed to identify. The combined gear weighed nearly 5,000 lbs.

I have submitted a piece to the Whidbey News Times about the Keystone recovery.

2006 MRC Grant

This year's grant round – available July 1 – will include these new funds:
B. MRC Staff/grant writing/educ 38,000 (\$8,000 increase)

C. MRC projects	55,000 (\$5,000 increase)
TOTAL	\$103,000 (\$13,000 +)

Here is the menu of options recently supplied by the Commission:

There are 4 possible scenarios for MRC to utilize new action grant funds. Your MRC may choose one or more of these options. In all cases, the funds will need to be spent by June 30, 2007 in order to avoid overlapping grants.

1. MRCs may choose to **supplement on-going projects** with FY2006 funds. This would allow projects to have a larger scope or include additional tasks. For example, MRCs doing an eelgrass mapping project could increase the geographic scope of the mapping. An oyster seeding project could be expanded or additional components (e.g. monitoring) could be added. These activities that expand a project already in the grant could be accomplished through a contract amendment. This fairly simple process can be processed in approximately 4-6 weeks and new 2006 funds would have to be spent by June 30, 2007, the end of the current grant cycle.
2. MRCs may want to identify all **new projects** for the coming year. This would require technical review and an amendment to your current grant. We will try to expedite technical reviews. Processing time is approximately 8 weeks and all 2006 funds must be spent by June 30, 2007, the end of the current grant cycle.
3. MRCs could request Commission staff to administer **derelict fishing gear removal or creosote debris removal** in their county and identify an amount for that to occur. In this case, funds would remain at the Commission and changes to current action grants would not need to occur. This process has already been used in Clallam, Snohomish and Island counties for FY 2004 funds. Participating MRCs would have the opportunity to work with the local media and community with regards to the project and take credit for the outcomes.
4. An MRC may find that they prefer to have some of their action grant funds put into a **regional project account**. For example, MRCs could contribute part of their action grant funds into the ecosystem account to be spent on a large regional project selected by the technical and science committee. This is the default option if your MRC does not use all available funds for options 1-3, and for any funds left unspent at the end of June, 2007. *Please consider placing funds here if there is any chance that you will be unable to spend out your grant in time.* This will allow the Commission to have ample time to ensure the funds are put to good use.

Commission staff expects to work with each MRC to plan for allocation of these funds. The earliest the funds will be available is July 1, 2006. MRCs should target July 1, 2006 as a potential start date. Any funds not allocated by September will default to option four.

Pre-Proposal Success

As you know, 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. Kim Bredensteiner will discuss today the available sites to undertake and perform specific restoration actions identified in the 2004-05 Johannessen shoreline evaluation.

Gary Wood, Executive Director

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Kind declared the meeting adjourned at 6:00 pm.

Coming Events

- Mar. 1,** Wednesday, 4-6 pm, MRC meets at Heller Road Firehall, Oak Harbor.
Lisa Kauffman, Ginny Broadhurst: Upcoming creosote removal projects on Whidbey Island
Kim Bredensteiner: Discussion--North Whidbey restoration opportunities
- Mar. 15,** Wednesday, 4-6 pm, MRC meets at Trinity Lutheran Church, Freeland
Keystone Ferry Terminal Update. Speakers: Hadley Greene & Charlie Torres of WSF
- Apr. 5** Wednesday, 4-6 pm, MRC meets at Heller Road Firehall, Oak Harbor
- Apr. 19** Wednesday, 4-6 pm, MRC meets at Trinity Lutheran Church, Freeland