



Marine Resources

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2006 Retreat

December 6, 2006, 2- 7 pm

Tom and Ann Campbell's home
Langley

PRESENT: Phyllis Kind, chair; Don Meehan, county lead; Rex Porter, executive director; Tom Campbell, Joe Hillers; Ian Jefferds; Rolf Seitle; Ken Urstad; Benye Weber; Dan Pedersen, Administrative Assistant; Kim Bredensteiner, Island County salmon recovery coordinator. **ABSENT:** Hi Bronson, Johnny Palka, Jeff Tate.

Key Conclusions

- ✓ **We can't do everything.** Must prioritize and sometimes outsource.
- ✓ **Need some small restoration successes** to engage the public.
- ✓ **Need a survey** of public knowledge and attitudes to establish a benchmark to measure our effectiveness, and any improvement or worsening that occurs over time.
- ✓ **We should report to the county commissioners** frequently.
- ✓ **We should be a more active advisor** to decision makers on marine issues.
- ✓ **We should recognize** that influencing opinion, attitudes, behavior and political will may be the greatest contribution we can make.
- ✓ **Protection is less expensive than restoration** – hence, our education and outreach work is important in generating public support for these efforts.

The Big Picture

Why are we here? Because we remember how fishing used to be and want it to be at least that good for the next generation.

What is the strength of this group?

- Diversity. We are a cross-section of the community with many different interests and disciplines.
- We are not an environmental group. This increases our credibility.
- We are advocates not only for marine life, but for all the resources that can be drawn from the water including commerce, industry and agriculture.
- Not greed-based, not seeking to protect a single special interest.
- We are the conscience of this community on marine issues. We are not government – not regulatory.

What have we accomplished?

- Data collection and mapping.
- Science.
- Marine stewardship areas.
- *Getting to the Water's Edge*
- A great deal of press coverage and outreach, partnering with Beach Watchers and other organizations.

Do the NWSC's benchmarks make sense for us? Yes, with some qualifications. Education and influencing public attitudes and behaviors may be the area where we can deliver the greatest impact. We need the flexibility to put more NWSC resources into this area, especially if we can satisfy the NWSC's expectations about on-the-ground efforts through larger grant projects.

Can we really change anything? Yes. **If so, what?** Political will. We can do more to influence county leadership and encourage the public to be more receptive to restoration and protection efforts.

Discussion by Benchmarks

Marine Habitats

NWSC Benchmark – Marine Habitats

Protect and restore marine, coastal and nearshore habitats, prevent loss and achieve a net gain of healthy marine habitat areas by

- Designing and initiating projects that are driven by sound science, local priorities, community-based decisions and the ability to measure results
- Designing and implementing local and regional projects that restore natural resources
- Surveying and mapping marine resources and physical characteristics of marine habitats; and
- Making policy and scientifically-based recommendations about appropriate management tools to protect marine habitats, including designation of marine protected areas.

Marine Habitat Discussion

- **Public fear and lack of political will** are real obstacles to local restoration opportunities. This was illustrated by the upwelling of opposition and misinformation at the recent community meeting to discuss the Greenbank Farm estuary.
- **We need some well-publicized small successes** to improve the political climate in Island County
- **The MRC should report regularly** to the county commissioners.
- **We should become more active** in making scientifically-based recommendations and advising policymakers on marine issues.
- **Education may be the most effective tool** at our disposal.
- **The Admiralty Inlet and Saratoga Passage MSAs** reflect our philosophy and approach to marine protected areas. Small, isolated MPAs are of dubious benefit to the environment. Change in public behavior needs to happen over a larger area, not in small, focused areas.

Marine Life

NWSC Benchmark – Marine Life

Protect and restore marine populations to healthy, sustainable levels by:

- Identifying and carrying out actions to protect and restore species of concern, including marine mammals, birds, fish, shellfish and other invertebrates
- Designing and implementing projects to restore native marine plant and animal populations and preventing the introduction and spread of invasive species.
- Rebuilding populations of fish species, particularly bottomfish, shellfish and forage fish, and
- Making policy and scientifically-based recommendations about appropriate management tools for species recovery, including designation of marine protected areas.

Marine Life Discussion – See Marine Habitats

Marine Water Quality

NWSC Benchmark – Marine Water Quality

Protect marine water quality of the Northwest Straits region and restore the health of marine waters by:

- Working to reduce the input of contaminants, including toxic substances, to the Northwest Straits marine waters
- Promoting management actions that would restore areas experiencing degraded water quality and sediment contamination, and
- Designing and supporting projects that will restore and maintain marine waters clean enough for safe marine harvest and consumption

Water Quality Discussion

- **The state’s tough new septic system regulations** may provide an opportunity for the MRC to become engaged in community education and outreach on this huge water quality issue.
- **Our Penn Cove buoy project is extremely valuable.** The Department of Health does not collect dissolved oxygen data in most of their surveys. When they do, it is inconsistent and intermittent. This is a gap we can fill with solid data.
- **Assessment of Coastal Water Resources and Watershed Conditions at Ebey’s Landing National Historic Park.** The National Park Service has commissioned this new study, which uses some of the same data we have collected.
- **Coupeville sewer plant.** One idea that may merit more study is to explore whether treated outflow from Coupeville’s sewer plant could be pumped to the prairie for irrigation. This would provide summer irrigation water and reduce dissolved oxygen in Penn Cove.

Sound Science

NWSC Benchmark – Sound Science

Collect high quality data and promote its use and dissemination by

- Developing protocols for the collection, analysis and use of scientific data that supports Northwest Straits goals

- Identifying gaps in data that limit protection and restoration efforts and work to fill those gaps
- Promoting the development of comprehensive, accessible marine resource databases
- Promoting the consistent collection and coordination of data to assist the efforts of the Northwest Straits and its partners in protecting habitats and species of concern, and
- Translating and disseminating scientific information about local marine resources to management agencies and the public.

Sound Science Discussion

- **Data collection** is one of the MRC's greatest strengths
- **Translating and disseminating** these data to the public and policymakers is proving to be the greater challenge.

Education and Outreach

NWSC Benchmark – Education and Outreach

Promote stewardship and understanding of Northwest Straits marine resources through education and outreach by

- Informing the public about threats to living resources and presenting them with practical measures they can take to prevent further harm
- Coordinating outreach and education programs with other organizations and evaluating their effectiveness
- Engaging the public in active stewardship opportunities through community workshops, restoration projects and educational programming, and
- Communicating the status of Northwest Straits habitats and resources to regional policy makers and resource managers.

Education and Outreach Discussion

- **Excellent press coverage** and support from the local news media are particular strengths of our MRC
- **Our shoreline stewardship book, *Water's Edge*, gives us a new tool to reach far beyond our usual core audience with a marine stewardship message.**
- **Our shoreline interpretive signage** will be another powerful outreach tool.
- **We need a survey** of public knowledge and attitudes about marine issues as a benchmark from which to measure the effectiveness of our future efforts, and any changes that may occur for better or worse.
- **Shore Stewards** is one of our most valuable communication education programs.