



# Marine Resources

Minutes

January 3, 2007

4:00 – 5:47 pm, Heller Road Firehall  
Oak Harbor

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

**PRESENT:** Chair **Phyllis Kind, Hi Bronson, Tom Campbell, Joe Hillers, Dick Toft, Ken Urstad, Benye Weber**, Executive Director designee **Rex Porter**, Communications Mgr. **Dan Pedersen**. **ALTERNATES:** Kim Bredensteiner for Meehan. **ABSENT:** **Ian Jefferds, Don Meehan, Johnny Palka, Rolf Seitle, Jeff Tate**. **VISITORS:** **Low Moore**, executive director, Northwest Straits Commission; **Kim Bredensteiner**, Salmon Recovery Program, Coupeville. **CALL TO ORDER:** 4:00 pm. **QUORUM:** Declared. **AGENDA:** Adopted. **MINUTES** of 10-18-2006: Adopted. Motion by Hillers, second by Urstad, carried unanimously. **CORRESPONDENCE:** None.

## SUMMARY OF DECISIONS

**Meeting locations.** Porter will inquire about the availability of a Coupeville meeting space for the MRC, such as the Commissioners' Hearing Room. Any decision to implement a change from Oak Harbor and/or Freeland will be made at a future meeting.

**MRC officers.** The MRC elected officers for 2007 as follows: Chair Dick Toft, Vice-Chair Ian Jefferds, NWSC Representative Phyllis Kind; NWSC Alternate Dick Toft.

**Project for UW student interns.** By consensus, the MRC approved a proposal by Porter to invite UW student interns to develop an adaptive management annex to the Salmon Recovery Plan.

## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

**Executive director contract status.** In Meehan's absence, Porter said he understands his contract is in process, currently undergoing legal review on its way to the commissioners for action. He is hopeful it will be signed during January. In the meanwhile he is supporting the committee in a somewhat low-key, informal capacity. Bredensteiner added that Jan Smith has been hired as watershed planner to fill Porter's former position with the county. She will assist with several grants relating to the watershed programs.

**National Fish & Wildlife Foundation (NFWF grant).** Porter said our next step is to turn our restoration proposal into a contract for the NFWF staff in San Francisco to review and send back to us. At a previous MRC meeting we prioritized six or seven sites. Porter said each site has its own flaws, any of which might, or might not, be fatal. Regardless, we should proceed, since our understanding with NFWF is that we will restore two or more sites, but it is not necessary at this time to say which ones. Our job next quarter will be to flesh out the information about each site. Between now and the next MRC meeting Porter expects he and Bredensteiner will meet with Deception Pass State Park manager, Jack Hartt, and do a risk assessment on his two sites. He said it might take six months to get a contract processed and approved by the county.

## NEW BUSINESS

**NWSC pursuing state funding.** Kind invited Lew Moore to speak. Moore said he wanted to make sure we knew the NWSC is actively pursuing state funding in this session of the legislature. The NWSC will call on the MRC for a letter of support and will ask for our help in lobbying our own state legislators. This is the first time the NWSC has approached the legislature. Moore said he is working with Rep. Brian Sullivan, chair of the Ecology committee, and with Sen. Harriet Spanel, majority caucus chair from the 40<sup>th</sup> legislative district. Island County's own Sen. Mary Margaret Haugen is another key contact. He said the NWSC is asking for \$1 million for the biennium, or \$500,000 per year.

**Potential problem with federal funding.** Moore said we may have a problem in our FY07 federal funding. Because of the tremendous abuse of the earmarking process – where legislators add line-items to legislation – the new House and Senate leadership has placed a moratorium on earmarking. This impacts us because it's how the NWSC gets its funding. He said the NWSC may also want our help in making sure Washington, D.C. is aware of the importance of this program. He said Sen. Patty Murray is counseling a wait-and-see approach for now. Moore said he thinks the likeliest scenario is that our FY07 funding will be kept level with FY06, at \$1.3 million. Sen. Murray had put in an earmark for \$1.6 million. We will probably know by Feb. 15, when the current funding ends.

**Northwest Straits Foundation.** Moore said the NWSC will focus heavily this year on building up the Northwest Straits Foundation, the third leg of our funding system. Last year the foundation raised almost half-a-million dollars, but it was mostly project-specific for derelict gear and creosote removal. This year the growth and development committee has a new chair, Scott McCreary, and the foundation is adding a fund-raiser, and he expects we will have a strong team to develop the unrealized potential the initiative has had for a long time. He said the NWSC welcomes the MRC's help in identifying potential donors, and that the MRCs should also consider the foundation a potential source of funding for projects that are not otherwise funded. He said he hopes the foundation will eventually be in a position to give grants to the MRCs for specific projects.

**Coordination.** Moore said the NWSC hopes to facilitate greater coordination and communication among MRCs. He plans to visit MRC meetings every two or three months, as will members of the staff, and he hopes to make the NWSC website more of a resource. He said he'd like to see more strategic planning by MRCs and would like to free-up more administrative funds to the MRCs to facilitate this. "We need to grow this initiative if we're going to be a part of cleaning up Puget Sound by 2020. We've all got to ramp up – start thinking in a longer-term manner."

**Election of officers.** Kind pointed out that the MRC was premature in holding officer elections at the December retreat, since the bylaws call for this election to occur at the first regular business meeting in January. She invited Weber, chair of the nominating committee, to present the slate of candidates. Weber presented the following slate with a recommendation of do-pass: Chair, Dick Toft; Vice-chair Ian Jefferds; NWSC representative Phyllis Kind; NWSC alternate, Dick Toft. **Motion by Hillers, second by Urstad, no discussion, carried unanimously, to elect the entire slate as presented.**

## PROJECT UPDATES

**Shore Stewards.** Bronson reported that in 2006, Shore Stewards added 141 new members, of whom 89 are on Whidbey and 52 on Camano. He pointed out that the Shore Stewards grant required only 40 new members. This brings total county enrollment to 322, with 129 on Whidbey and 193 on Camano, where the program was started. Bronson predicted that Scott Chase will enroll another large group at Sound Waters University on Feb. 3.

**Water's Edge book.** Pedersen reported that about half the 5,000-book print-run of *Getting to the Water's Edge* was distributed in the six-week sales window leading up to the holidays. This included 1,330 wholesaled to 28 bookstores and shops in four counties, plus about 1,000 more distributed to sponsors, real estate agents and the county tourism committee. He mentioned that Kingfisher Books in Oak Harbor has sold 150; Snow Goose Books in Stanwood has sold 130, and Moonraker Books in Langley has sold 100. Just today the *News-Times* and *Record* published a full-page review as the cover story in "On! Whidbey," a monthly magazine distributed as an insert to the two newspapers. Pedersen said the book rollout had gone just about perfectly. The MRC is getting its stewardship message in front of a large audience. Hillers commented the timing of release was absolutely perfect. Hillers, Kind and Weber all said the rollout party on Dec. 5 was impressive. Campbell emphasized he objected to cutting a deal with one real estate brokerage to the exclusion of others. Pedersen pointed out that Windermere-Coupeville gave us a donation to help print the book at a time when we were exhausted and scrambling to find the funds to get it on the press. We lacked the staff and resources to pursue other brokerages, though Scott Chase attempted unsuccessfully to engage the Windermere offices on Camano. Campbell stressed we should never again offer an exclusive like this to one business. Kind suggested we table the discussion until another meeting when Meehan can be present to participate in the conversation.

**Signage.** Pedersen reported the project is temporarily on hold. He and Porter have not had the time to sit down and determine how to move forward on Coupeville Wharf. Porter pointed out that every project needs an MRC facilitator, and that person for signage is Jefferds. He needs to be included in the discussion. Pedersen said the project is in quite good shape, but there is much work to be done and there aren't a lot of human resources available to do it. Kind encouraged MRC members to take a look at the panel we've already installed at Clinton Beach. Porter said he expected by the first meeting of February we'll have a report on where we are now and what to do next.

**Water quality.** Hillers reported he hopes to meet in the next couple weeks with the Science Committee and determine what to do with our data. He said a prominent water quality authority, Jan Newton of the University of Washington, is on the program at Sound Waters University, Feb. 3. He hopes to talk with her there. He also reported the county is creating a South Holmes Harbor Protection Program to actively pursue improving water quality on the south end of Holmes Harbor. Porter pointed out that last summer the Department of Health prohibited recreational and tribal/commercial shellfishing after finding fecal coliforms at two Holmes Harbor sites. The Revised Code of Washington considers this a water quality event and requires the county to act within 180 days, which is the reason for creation of the protection program. Hillers said he thinks this has real potential for the MRC – the county has identified this part of Holmes Harbor as the number 1 concern for marine water quality.

**Estuary seining.** Urstad reported seining will start next month. The schedule will be twice a month, phasing out in June or July when the temperature gets too high and the catch becomes only shiners. Bredensteiner mentioned this year's sites will be Race, Harrington, Ala Spit, Elger Bay and probably English Boom on Camano. All the data goes to Eric Beamer at Skagit River System Cooperative. Bredensteiner said the reports get posted eventually to the SRSC website, where they may be viewed, but that it is a slow process for him to compile the reports because he has no funding for that task, so it falls to the bottom of his priorities. Urstad mentioned that the people who live near those estuaries are very, very interested in the findings. Hillers asked if there is some way the MRC can expedite these reports. Bredensteiner said that if the MRC would include a line item of a few thousand dollars in its budget for this reporting, she is sure it would become a higher priority. Hillers said he'd like a presentation from Beamer to the MRC so we'll have a better idea of who he is and what he's doing.

**Bluff birds.** Kind reported that the Georgia Basin Puget Sound Research Conference has accepted our abstract for their conference. When Frances Wood gets back from New Zealand, Kind hopes to pursue a grant opportunity with the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW). Whidbey Audubon will apply for funds to help operate the boat next year to look for juvenile birds offshore. Early next week, Kind will

contact John Bower at Western and Julia Parrish at the University of Washington to see if they can provide an intern to deploy our treetop camera. The camera is mounted on a 50-foot pole so the operator needs enough upper-body strength to be able to handle this work. Kind said she is also interested in having an intern monitor bird behavior at one or two sites to answer such questions as how often do guillemots bring fish to their young? How many fish does it take to raise a chick?

**Creosote and derelict gear.** Urstad reported that both Lisa Kauffman and Jeff June will give classes at Sound Waters. So their presentations will help the public better understand what's happening on these two projects. Lew Moore the NWSC has entered into a \$243,000 contract to continue the derelict gear removal program with Jeff June. \$100,000 of state funding also has been set aside for this.

## LEADERSHIP REPORTS

Executive Director – Porter

**Nearshore class.** Porter reported he and Bredensteiner are presenting a nearshore class at Sound Waters, Feb. 3, and also that the MRC's tabletop display from the Rosario Conference will be set up in the display hall during lunch.

**Meeting locations.** Porter commented several individuals have asked whether we should consider changing meeting sites from Heller Road Firehall, given the room's shortcomings. We must reapply to the fire district every three months, filling out a written room-request from scratch. It's a noisy room and a heavy job to set up and tear down the tables and chairs each time. All our members except Hi Bronson live south of Oak Harbor, and the public almost never attends. He asked whether Coupeville might be an acceptable alternative. Bronson said Coupeville would work fine for him if all our meetings were held there. Toft cautioned it might be hard to find a room in Coupeville on which we could consistently rely. Porter said he was thinking of the commissioners' hearing room. Kind pointed out that Whidbey Audubon had tried unsuccessfully to hold public meetings in Oak Harbor, but were quite successful in Coupeville. Weber said she believes it's important to continue to cultivate the people of north Whidbey. She said much of the work different agencies have done over the years has been targeted at central and south Whidbey. It is important to meet in Oak Harbor to create awareness among north Whidbey people that we are here and doing business on their turf. Pedersen asked whether there aren't other ways to reach out to the people of north Whidbey. Toft said the one thing we can do at this point is investigate the possibility of getting the commissioners' hearing room. If we can't get a suitable room, that might table the discussion right there.

**Request for proposal from University of Washington.** Porter reported that the University of Washington is soliciting project proposals for a small team of student interns in environmental sciences. They are looking for projects that involve species of concern and cut across policy issues, science issues, business, education, outreach and marketing. The executive committee met with Kim Bredensteiner during the December holidays and outlined a potential project relating to salmon recovery. He shared a written summary of this idea, which would involve the MRC partnering with the Planning Department. It calls for the students to develop an adaptive management plan for salmon recovery that could be adopted as an active annex to the Island County Salmon Recovery Plan. Porter added before Meehan left on vacation he had mentioned in passing the possibility of pursuing a Shore Stewards project for the students. In the event Meehan is still interested in this other idea, we might pursue it rather than the salmon recovery proposal. Members agreed they liked the proposed idea.

Chair – Kind.

**Citizen monitoring program for Northwest Straits.** Kind reported the Technical Committee of the Northwest Straits Commission would like to develop a citizen monitoring program that would bring together people from all the MRCs. Under consideration so far are digging shellfish for bacterial and

chemical analysis, collection of water and sediment analysis, shoreline beach surveys, surveys of birds and wildlife, and water quality measurements. She said any of these might be programs that could be conducted throughout the Northwest Straits. Kind explained that the Puget Sound Partnership is interested in getting some monitoring programs moving that would involve citizens more in understanding the health of Puget Sound. She asked whether members had any ideas. Toft said he felt this was the reason many of the MRC members originally joined – to have their finger on the pulse of Puget Sound. He said he'd like to know what our county and state health departments are doing already. Then if we find a gap we can fill it. Kind said she thinks the Partnership's intention with this is to "increase the choir" – involve more citizens in looking at the sound. Toft suggested debris pickup on the shoreline. Pedersen suggested a citizen campaign to collect and monitor plastic pollution.

**ADJOURNMENT: 5:47 pm**

There being no further business, Kind declared the meeting adjourned at 5:47 pm.

### MRC Calendar

- Jan. 17** Wednesday, 4-6 pm, MRC meets at Trinity Lutheran Church, **Freeland.**
- Feb. 3** Saturday, 9-4:30, **Sound Waters** University, **Coupeville Middle School**
- Feb. 7** Wednesday, 4-6 pm, MRC meets at Heller Road Firehall, **Oak Harbor.**
- Feb. 21** Wednesday, 4-6 pm, MRC meets at Trinity Lutheran Church, **Freeland.**