

ISLAND COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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Minutes

Prepared by Dan Pedersen

Feb. 5, 2008

COMMISSIONERS' HEARING ROOM B-102, ISLAND COUNTY ANNEX, COUPEVILLE

PRESENT: Chair **Dick Toft**, **Hi Bronson**, **Joe Hillers**, **Phyllis Kind**, **Matt Kukuk**, **Don Meehan**, **Johnny Palka**, **Ken Urstad**, Executive Director **Rex Porter**, Communications Manager **Dan Pedersen**.
ABSENT: **Tom Campbell** (unknown), **Ian Jefferds** (Kona hatchery), **Lynae Slinden** (tending her retail business), **Benye Weber** (in Blaine).

VISITORS:

Kim Bredensteiner, Coupeville, Island County salmon recovery program.
Scott Chase, Camano Island, coordinator, Island County Shore Stewards.

CALL TO ORDER: 3:33 pm. **QUORUM:** Declared. **AGENDA:** Adopted with the addition of a discussion of the Puget Sound Partnership's action agenda. **MINUTES** of 1-15-2008: Adopted. Motion by Kind, second by Hillers, no objections. **CORRESPONDENCE:** E-mail from Cyrilla Cook to be discussed under Unfinished Business.

Summary of Decisions / Action Items

Signage letter - Oak Harbor Rotary. Pedersen will ask Sarah Schmidt to write a letter to the Oak Harbor Rotary by next week requesting they help sponsor a local signage panel to go alongside our Saratoga Passage common panel on the city's shoreline.

March 18 meeting location. Meehan will attempt to reserve Room 131 for our March 18 meeting, when we expect Nancy Conard and also the UW student team working on our adaptive management project. It would be a quieter location for these presentations than B-102.

DNR Aquatic Reserve – Smith and Minor islands. Porter will draft a letter stating we support in principle the idea of an aquatic reserve for Smith and Minor Islands, but that the proposal outlined to us to date is not complete enough for us to endorse.

NWSC contract amendments. Motion by Kind, second by Urstad, carried unanimously, to accept four proposed amendments to our NWSC contract.

FINANCES

Six-month review. Porter pointed out we have expended about half our \$87,000 annual budget, which is where we want to be after six months. He noted we are 23 percent over-expended at this point on Task 2, Shore Stewards, but that in talking with Scott Chase he feels reassured everything is on track. We have expended only about \$2,000 of our \$10,000 budget for Task 3, signage, but Porter believes we will be able to spend the rest by June 30. Pedersen said we now have a backlog of work awaiting attention by our signage artist. The challenge will be how fast she can do the work so the bills get generated fast enough to manufacture the panels and pay for

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them by June 30. Toft asked if he could get a letter officially asking Oak Harbor Rotary for a sponsorship donation and Pedersen said he would ask Sarah Schmidt to write it, since she has been sending similar letters to other groups. On Task 5, Cornet Bay, Porter pointed out we have already spent more than half the annual budget. The grant has doubled in size and become more labor intensive than he anticipated. He said he'd like to talk later in the meeting about adjusting his time. On Task 7, Community Advisory, we have spent only \$30 of the available \$1,000 and Porter said he is open to suggestions on how we might spend the available funds by June 30. Palka suggested digital-taping this year's Whidbey Lyceum lectures on the health of Puget Sound. Kind suggested sponsoring a public meeting on the Swantown Lake issue, which concerns a lake and possibly an estuary.

PROJECT REPORTS – NWSC GRANT-FUNDED

Shore Stewards. Chase reported he enrolled 20 new Shore Stewards at Sound Waters and handed out many enrollment cards for people to take home. The program now has about 472 members. Chase said when he gets to 500 he would love to have an announcement in the newspaper. "I know who #1 was, Tom Eisenburg, the co-chair of Friends of Camano Island Parks." Chase said he is preparing for a series of workshops in April – two shoreline workshops, one on Whidbey and another on Camano, a Sound Gardening workshop and an LID / rain garden workshop with Whidbey Island Conservation District.

Cornet Bay. Porter reminded members this project started with a \$173,000 grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. Now it has grown to \$315,000 with added funding from Washington State Parks, the City of Oak Harbor and Northwest Straits Commission, to carry out a feasibility assessment, design and as much permitting as we can on Cornet Bay. Our work will be folded into a bid solicitation by the state parks regional office for a \$1 million project to improve day-use facilities on the Cornet Bay uplands. Our work will be tasks within their solicitation. Parks has drafted a memorandum of understanding (MOU). We have drafted our tasks to go on their statement of work. "That's the stage we're in right now," Porter said, "getting a solicitation written and an MOU between us and parks. This is exciting because we can do a lot of good work for three-hundred-plus thousand." He said he hopes the entire MRC membership will try to be on hand to walk the Cornet Bay nearshore together on May 20, when we are scheduled to meet there.

Shoreline signage. Pedersen reported we have six local panels lined up for production right now – one for Maxwelton Beach, three for Freund Marsh in Oak Harbor, and two for English Boom on Camano. All the writing is essentially finished. At this stage it's in the hands of the artist. "It's a pretty big pile of work," he said. We need to spend \$8,000 by June 30 and could easily spend it if Kris Wiltse can complete the art fast enough. After she does the art we need to place an order for manufacturing, allowing about two months' lead time so we can pay that bill before June 30. Eventually, about \$12,000 will come flowing back to the MRC because four of these six signs are being subsidized by sponsors. He commented that Sarah Schmidt has been putting out inquiries to service clubs in search of sponsors for additional signs. Pedersen is very anxious to find a sponsor for local panels to put on the bluff in Langley, with its stunning view of Saratoga Passage. Schmidt is working with the City of Langley to place our Saratoga Passage common panel there. She has submitted a request to South Whidbey Rotary for support. Toft is eager to make sure we can find the funds to do some additional local panels at Flintstone Park in Oak Harbor, on the opposite end of the shore from the signs we're doing at Freund Marsh.

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OTHER PROJECTS – NOT FUNDED BY OUR NWSC GRANT

Water's Edge. Meehan reported his office has placed an order to print 3,000 more books. He said Stacey Neumiller made a few small tweaks. Toft reported he attended a fly fishers' meeting Saturday and heard many compliments on it. All costs of the reprint are funded by wholesale revenue generated from sales of the first printing.

UW/Luce Fellow Keystone Specie Management Plan. Porter said the team of UW students working on our salmon recovery adaptive management plan are now starting their second school term of activity. They spent the first term getting to know us and building a menu of what they could do for us. Now they are collecting data, drafting ideas, brainstorming and engaging us by e-mail and telephone calls to determine what they should suggest in such areas as outreach and science. They would like to meet with us March 18 to update us on where they are and ask some questions to help guide their work in the third and final term of their project. Palka said the students are trying to sharpen the community outreach component of the plan. He pointed out none of them are personally familiar with Whidbey Island. They don't know the people and organizations here, so they are having to learn things about the milieu that we take for granted. This is both good and bad. It's an extra step for them, but the benefit for us is that they start with fewer assumptions and get a fresher look at some aspects of our community. They will be contacting all the members of the MRC by e-mail to ask some questions. Meehan said he will see if we can get the conference room 131 next to his office for the March 18 meeting. On the third Tuesday of the month our meetings with outside speakers in the commissioners' hearing room often are disrupted by another organization that meets in the other half of this space.

Creosote removal. Urstad reported that the contract is going out for creosote cleanup on a stretch of beach from Joseph Whidbey State Park almost to Rocky Point. The Navy is soliciting bids for this work.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Smith and Minor Islands Aquatic Reserve. Porter shared an e-mail from Cyrilla Cook of People for Puget Sound addressing the questions we had raised when she spoke to our January 15 meeting. Bredensteiner said she recently had a long phone conversation with Cook and now understands more about the proposal and the timeline. She said she understands the proposal focuses specifically on DNR leases. Any future leases within the reserve would be looked at very carefully and DNR would seek to reduce the impact of any current leases within the area's boundaries. Meehan shared a map of geoduck harvesting areas in Island County. A large geoduck area falls within the proposed reserve. Bredensteiner said fishing will not be affected. DNR has no control over fishing – that's Washington Department of Fisheries. Urstad wondered if this reserve would impact sea cucumber harvest, since they are taken from the bottom, but Meehan pointed out sea cucumbers are regulated by Fisheries, as are sea urchins. Urstad asked what affect the reserve might have on tribal geoduck harvesting. Bredensteiner said she did not know. She said the reason the reserve stretches from the islands to the mainland is because they are trying to think in terms of marine wildlife corridors. The birds and marine mammals that use the kelp beds along the Whidbey shoreline move back and forth to the kelp beds around the islands. She said she thinks this is a good opportunity to partner with People for Puget Sound and see where this goes, though there is no guarantee it will come about. Meehan said he has talked with several DNR people who all seem very positive about the proposal. Porter said his reservation is that the proposal seems poorly staffed at this point and lacks a local sponsor or connection. "I'm a big

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believer that you get one chance. I'm afraid of what would happen if any one of us had to take this map and go before a group and explain why this box appears arbitrary. If we couldn't explain the biology, all it would take is one good objection and it would be toast for the next 15 years." Bredensteiner said she would encourage the MRC to invite someone from DNR to talk to us about the reserve program. Meehan said he has no philosophical objection to the reserve but we have a commitment to look after the maritime industries and need to be able to understand all the thinking behind this proposal. Kind said it makes sense to write a letter expressing general philosophical support but asking for better information before making any endorsement. Toft agreed. Porter will draft a letter and share it with the executive committee.

NEW BUSINESS

NWSC contract changes. Porter is proposing four changes to our NWSC contract. Amendment 1 would increase the capacity of our Cornet Bay restoration task to enlarge the feasibility assessment and site design work. This adds \$44,000 of money that became available from the NWSC when other MRCs were unable to spend all their funds in the allotted time. Amendment 2 would allocate an additional \$3,000 of signage funds to Pedersen's contract. His signage workload has increased, in part because of the opportunity to write three sign panels for Freund Marsh in Oak Harbor that we had not foreseen. Amendment 3 would allocate an additional \$6,000 to Porter for administrative work on the Cornet Bay project, which has grown considerably in scope. Amendment 4 does not involve any additional money, but would extend the time period for completion of Schmidt's work on Cornet Bay until June 30, 2008.

MOTION CARRIED. Motion by Kind, second by Urstad, carried unanimously to accept the requested changes.

PSP Action Agenda. Toft pointed out that David Dicks and Linda Lyshall have asked us for some input on the PSP's Action Agenda, which they need by Jan. 29. Meehan said PSP is trying to determine where gaps exist in the work being done by various organizations. "They don't want a bunch of fine detail but to know what we're doing. The weakness in this is that you can say you engage in community education, but they can't tell whether it's a little or a lot. We need to articulate the scope of what we do." Meehan said he is going to supply PSP the information for the work of his WSU programs, including Shore Stewards, and he will be happy to work with Porter to do the same for the MRC.

MRC briefing to county commissioners. Palka asked for a report on what happened when we briefed the county commissioners in January about our activities. Porter reported that only two commissioners were present – Dean and Bakke. They seemed receptive to our partnering with Snohomish MRC on a Port Susan Marine Stewardship Area but asked us to brief McDowell as well. Toft said he has tried twice to catch up with McDowell but has not yet succeeded. Bronson asked, "So in terms of Port Susan MSA and recruiting a new member from Camano Island, we still don't know where we stand?" Meehan replied that Bakke would like us to offer a seat on the MRC to Bryan Nichols of Nichols Brothers Boat Builders. We have only one vacancy. "That would be great unless it prevents us from getting that other member from Camano Island," Toft said. "Is there a limit?" Meehan replied that right now the limit is 13, and we have 12. Bronson said Snohomish MRC is advertising right now for three new members and he believes they want all three to work on this project. Bronson said he would try to carry the load himself for a while and maybe could handle it, "especially if we start getting some staff support." Meehan asked whether we have anyone on Camano who might be a candidate. "We have someone in mind," Bronson said, "but we don't want to approach him till we know where things stand."

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Pedersen suggested we at least put an article in the Stanwood-Camano News asking if anyone is interested in serving on the MRC. “People remember these articles for four or five years.” Bronson commented, “That’s what drew me to it.”

Sound Waters. Meehan said 540 attended and it was a resounding success. David Dicks delivered the keynote and was thoroughly impressed. “He has a real appreciation of local government now and truly values what the MRCs are up to. And he’s hot on this program now – on Beach Watchers.” Palka commented that Dicks is coming back to Island County in May to speak at the Whidbey Lyceum.

ADJOURNMENT. 5:15 pm.

MRC Meetings and Events		
3:30 – 5:30 pm, first and third Tuesdays, Commissioners’ Hearing Room B-102 in <u>Coupeville</u>		
Feb. 19	Tue	3:30 Educational meeting. Speaker: Jacques White, The Nature Conservancy, on San Juan MSA lessons learned and Port Susan MSA.
Mar. 4	Tue	3:30 Business meeting
Mar. 18	Tue	3:30 Educational meeting. Presentation: Tentative. UW / Luce Fellow student team, on their adaptive management project. Speaker: Tentative, Nancy Conard, mayor of Coupeville, on Reclaimed Water Project.
Apr. 1	Tue	3:30 Business meeting.
Apr. 15	Tue	3:30 Educational meeting. Speaker: Tentative. Graham Johnson, WSU Beach Watchers, on proposed marine education center for Coupeville Wharf.
May 6	Tue	3:30 Business meeting
May 20	Tue	3:30 Educational meeting. Program: Tentative. Cornet Bay site survey and project overview, Deception Pass State Park.
June 3	Tue	3:30 Business meeting
June 17	Tue	3:30 Educational meeting. Speaker: Tentative. UW Luce Fellowship on Adaptive Management Annex to Salmon Recovery Plan.
Summer Schedule – One Meeting Per Month		
July 15	Tue	3:30 Business / educational meeting. Speaker: Tentative. Aundrea McBride on Possession Point Restoration Feasibility Assessment results.
Aug19	Tue	3:30 Business / educational meeting.
Sep 16	Tue	3:30 Business / educational meeting.