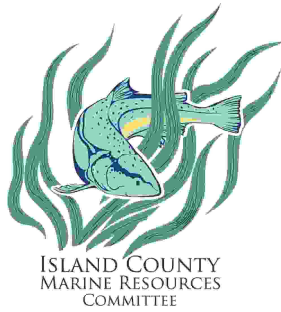


ISLAND COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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Minutes

Prepared by Dan Pedersen

Mar. 4, 2008

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

PRESENT: Chair **Dick Toft**, **Joe Hillers**, **Ian Jefferds**, **Phyllis Kind**, **Matt Kukuk**, **Lynae Slinden**, **Benye Weber**, Executive Director **Rex Porter**, Communications Manager **Dan Pedersen**. **ABSENT:** **Tom Campbell** (on cruise), **Hi Bronson** (vacationing Hawaii), **Don Meehan** (ag meeting), **Johnny Palka** (selling house), **Ken Urstad** (grandkids' playoff game).

VISITORS:

Helen Price Johnson, Clinton, candidate for county commissioner

Todd Zackey, Tulalip Tribes

Sarah Schmidt, Coupeville, MRC contractor

Scott Chase, Camano Island, coordinator, Island County Shore Stewards

CALL TO ORDER: 3:35 pm. **QUORUM:** Declared. **AGENDA:** Adopted. **MINUTES** of 2-19-2008: Adopted. Motion by Kind, second by Weber, no objections. **CORRESPONDENCE:** None.

Summary of Decisions / Action Items

By consensus the group identified the following uses for our \$25,000 share of the additional NWSC funding for FY 2008:

- \$12,000 **Eelgrass** survey (new project) – Meehan to write proposal
- \$ 5,000 **Signage** (added to existing \$10,000) – Pedersen to write proposal
- \$ 4,000 **Pigeon guillemot** survey (building on last FY's \$3,000 survey) – Kind to write proposal
- \$ 2,000 **Website maintenance** (new project) – Pedersen to write proposal
- \$ 2,000 **UW Environmental Management** graduate marine water quality monitoring project seed money – Porter to write proposal

NWSC GRANT REPORTS

Seining – Urstad (absent, no report)

Pigeon Guillemot Survey – Kind reported that she and Frances Wood attended the recent Pacific Seabird Conference. They took our Sound Waters pigeon guillemot display, leftover copies of last year's poster, guillemot greeting cards and other materials. She said the response was very good, with many suggestions offered and attendees taking most of the available handouts. "It was a very positive conference for us," she said. Kind said Prof. John Bower of Western Washington University was at the meeting. He was the person who found the summer intern we used last year, Houston Flores, and Kind said Bower has two more candidates for us to consider this year.

Low impact development – Porter reminded members we budgeted \$1,000 to lay the groundwork this year for an LID project, and \$3,000 next year to actually carry out a project. He noted that Whidbey Island Conservation District is partnering with Island County Health

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Department on a \$10,000 project – a three-part workshop consisting of a general introduction to LID, followed by a pervious surface workshop and a rain-garden workshop. Porter said he approached them and explained we have \$1,000 available and we'd be glad to help them. They have several needs with which our money could help. Porter said he will gather more specifics to present at the next business meeting, and that if we become a partner we might help them financially next year with the pervious surface and rain garden workshops.

Community liaison – Porter reminded members we budgeted \$1,000 this year and \$2,000 next year for community liaison projects. At our last business meeting two suggestions were offered for spending this money. Palka suggested we put some of it into recording this year's Lyceum presentations so the lectures can be made available to a wider audience. The second suggestion was to assist in facilitating the Swantown dialogue. This is clearly a watershed issue, he said.

OTHER REPORTS

Derelict gear – Urstad (absent, no report)

MRC website -- Pedersen reported that the website is going to need updating soon. We have one new member appointed (Slinden), another pending (Nichols), and a new position brewing for Camano Island. So we'll soon need to post three new photos and biographies. When we launched our new website last year we did not have funds to address ongoing maintenance. No new minutes have been posted in 2008 because the template on the minutes page is full. "We need to have a web designer get in there once in a while and freshen some things up," he said.

Water quality – Hillers reported that a faculty member from Oregon State University and three faculty members from Washington State University have submitted a \$200,000 grant application to the U.S. Department of Agriculture to work on the agricultural application end of the water reclamation project for Coupeville.

Port Susan MSA – Chase reported that he, Hi Bronson and Tom Eisenberg will travel together to tomorrow's meeting of the Port Susan MSA working group.

Puget Sound Partnership integration – Meehan (absent, no report)

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Priorities for additional NWSC funds in FY 2008. Kind reported the NWSC has decided to offer an additional \$25,000 to each MRC, subject to each group's application and approval. The additional money may be used for new or existing projects. Kind said she expects some MRCs may not even ask for their share, in which case the surplus would go into the ecosystem research fund for projects that span several counties, such as Port Susan MSA or widespread forage fish or eelgrass surveys. Porter said the NWSC wants our proposal by April 4. They will evaluate it by May 2 and approve proposals at their May 15 meeting, with the money becoming available July 1. Porter also reminded the committee that the individuals championing the five added project funds would be asked to document the project description by the April 4 deadline. By consensus the group identified the following uses for our added \$25,000:

- \$12,000 **Eelgrass** survey (new project) – Meehan to write proposal
- \$ 5,000 **Signage** (added to existing \$10,000) – Pedersen to write proposal
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Cornet Bay. Weber asked whether additional funds are needed for Cornet Bay. Porter responded that the project currently is at \$315,000, mostly to fund feasibility assessments and early permitting. “I would think there are other, greater needs right now,” he said. “We could use another \$300,000 to do physical work, but we won’t know which way we’re going for about six more months.”

Pigeon guillemots. Kind said she hopes to find a guillemot intern this summer who can study specifically which fish the birds are catching and help determine why. Last summer’s intern, Houston Flores, observed the birds were catching mostly blennies early in the season. Later they shifted to about 50 percent blennies and 50 percent sculpins. Kind said she learned at the Pacific Seabird Conference that many people are studying the food supply going to chicks, measuring the length of the fish by taking a photo and comparing the length to the number of bill-lengths. She said she would like to find an expert who knows the nutritional value of the various fish. One of the questions to be answered is whether the birds are simply catching what’s available, or if something else is driving this.

Signage. On signage, Pedersen reminded the group we had originally budgeted \$12,000 but then cut it back to \$10,000 when we needed to piece together several thousand dollars for a one-time reimbursement to the NWSC resulting from an earlier contract issue. He said he hoped we could restore the lost dollars and perhaps increase the budget a bit to produce local signage panels for a couple more sites where we might be unable to find a local service club to sponsor them.

Eelgrass. Porter said it is clear we have more surveying needs than money. Members agreed we need to use technology that will provide a basis for comparison of one survey to another, but several were less than enthusiastic about the point-to-point survey done in the past, since it really does not show the full extent of an eelgrass bed – only the presence or absence of eelgrass at specific GPS points. “I didn’t feel very comfortable with that,” Jefferds said. “I had the same feeling,” Toft said. Jefferds wondered aloud whether aerial photography might give a more complete picture. Porter suggested we leave open the question of which technology to use. Toft suggested we prioritize the sites and do what our money will allow. Kind suggested we might get some eelgrass help through the Northwest Straits Foundation. Todd Zackey described his generally satisfactory experience with aerial eelgrass surveys. Toft asked if Zackey ever went a step further and tried to determine why it is decreasing in certain areas. Zackey said the causes are complex. One observation he shared is that eelgrass is not very good at reseeding itself – it spreads more by root action. He said a University of Washington PhD student, Ginger Shoemaker, has been studying eelgrass closely.

UW Luce Fellow. Porter commented that the professor who administers the UW Luce team already is looking ahead to next year and thinking the school might like to partner with us again. Porter said he talked with Bredensteiner and they believe Penn Cove water quality might be a good project. This could include studying the monitoring that has occurred in Penn Cove, what’s being done by both the Department of Ecology and Department of Health, what Coupeville is contributing to the nearshore, and what would change if the reclaimed water project is implemented. Porter would like to offer the team a token stipend to cover some of their costs. The university would like \$5,000 but probably would do the project for free. Porter thinks even \$2,000 would be a show of good faith by us. Hillers said it would be tremendously valuable to know what might change in Penn Cove if the water quality reclamation project is implemented. “That’s huge,” Weber agreed. Hillers said he would especially like to know the impact of stormwater. Kind asked if we should hire a contractor to study the entire county including all the municipalities and make some recommendations on what we should be doing, since very little information is available and there is no coordination across various jurisdictions. Kukuk commented that Chris Wilson probably is the best qualified person to state what’s being done now, since the Planning Department has a freshwater / surface water quality monitoring program, but he acknowledged no one has the overall picture that takes into account other jurisdictions.

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NEW BUSINESS

Toft / Meehan briefing of McDowell. Toft reported that he and Meehan met today with commissioner McDowell about the MRC's 2007 activities and interest in partnering with Snohomish MRC on a Port Susan Marine Stewardship Area. He said McDowell asked good questions about the cost and impact on taxpayers, and ok'd our engaging Snohomish in exploring this. Toft said it appears McDowell is also receptive to enlarging the MRC to include another Camano member.

ADJOURNMENT. 5:02 pm.

MRC Meetings and Events		
3:30 – 5:30 pm, first and third Tuesdays, Commissioners' Hearing Room B-102 in <u>Coupeville</u>		
Mar. 18	Tue	3:30 Educational meeting. Speaker: Nancy Conard , mayor of Coupeville, on Reclaimed Water Project. Presentation: UW / Luce Fellow student team , on their adaptive management project.
Apr. 1	Tue	3:30 Business meeting. Speaker: Graham Johnson , WSU Beach Watchers, on proposed marine education center for Coupeville Wharf.
Apr. 15	Tue	3:30 Educational meeting.
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.