

# ISLAND COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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## Minutes

Prepared by Dan Pedersen

Jan. 6, 2009

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

**PRESENT:** Chair **Dick Toft**, **Lenny Corin**, **Leal Dickson**, **Judy Feldman**, **Joe Hillers**, **Ian Jefferds**, **Phyllis Kind**, **Matt Kukuk**, **Lynae Slinden**, **Ken Urstad**, **Benye Weber**, Executive Director **Rex Porter**, Communications Manager **Dan Pedersen**. **ABSENT:** **Hi Bronson** (conflicting engagement).

### VISITORS:

**Craig Collar**, Everett, Snohomish County Public Utility District (speaker)

**Scott Chase**, Camano Island, Island County Shore Stewards.

**Bill Oakes**, Island County Director of Public Works, Coupeville

**William Bradkin**, Coupeville

**Elizabeth Davis**, Freeland

**Don Meehan**, Coupeville, WSU Natural Resources Program

**Jim Somers**, Oak Harbor, WSU Beach Watchers

**Roger Sherman**, Coupeville

**Nancy Waddell**, Clinton, administrator, Whidbey Watershed Stewards

+ **Approximately 60 Coupeville High School science students**

**CALL TO ORDER:** 3:33 pm. **QUORUM:** Declared. **AGENDA:** Adopted. **MINUTES** of Dec. 2, 2008: Adopted. Motion by Kind, second by Urstad, adopted by consensus.

Toft welcomed the public, including about 60 Coupeville High School students who are receiving extra credit from their instructors for attending today's presentation on tidal energy generation.

### CORRESPONDENCE:

**Letter of support for Beach Watchers.** Toft reported that in response to a motion carried at the Dec. 2 meeting, he sent a letter to several legislators and the governor expressing the MRC's support for appropriations to fund continued operation of WSU Beach Watchers in the counties where the program currently exists and to expand it to the counties of southern Puget Sound. Pedersen, Meehan, Kind and Toft collaborated on the letter, which Toft sent Dec. 16 to Gov. Gregoire, Sen. Haugen, Rep. Bailey, Rep. Smith, and the following members of Puget Sound Partnership: David Dicks, William Ruckelshaus and Steve Sakuma, and to John Stark of WSU.

### Action Items

**Motion to redirect funds from Task 10, UW Keystone Project.** Motion by Kind, second by Weber, to reduce Task 10, UW Keystone Project, as recommended by the UW Graduate Program and apply the balance of the original \$2,000 to other tasks. Carried unanimously.

**Resolution honoring Tom Campbell.** Motion by Kind, adopted by acclamation: *Whereas Tom Campbell was one of the founding members of the Island County Marine Resources*

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*Committee; Whereas, he is the first member to complete three full terms on the committee; Whereas, he was an articulate advocate for the resource and especially for sport fishers; Whereas, he injected a bit of humor into the meetings; Whereas, he served on the executive committee and as chairman of the committee for two years; Therefore, be it resolved that Tom Campbell is granted the status of Island County Marine Resources Committee Curmudgeon Emeritus with all the rights, duties and privileges pertaining thereto.*

**Motion to elect officers.** Motion by Kind, second by Weber, to elect the following slate of MRC officers for 2009. Chair Ian Jefferds, vice-chair Joe Hillers, NWSC Representative Rex Porter, NWSC alternate Hi Bronson. Carried unanimously.

**Motion to allocate \$500 to Whidbey Lyceum Series booklet.** Motion by Weber, second by Slinden, to allocate \$500 from the MRC's Task 7 budget, Community Advisory project, to fund printing of the Whidbey Lyceum program booklet. Carried unanimously.

**Motion to fund registration costs for Puget Sound Georgia Basin Conference attendees.** Motion by Kind, second by Toft, for the MRC to contribute \$200 from the Administration budget, in addition to \$600 from the NWSC, to pay registration costs for four individuals to attend the Puget Sound Georgia Basin Conference. Carried unanimously.

## SPEAKER

### Tidal Energy Generation in Admiralty Inlet

Craig Collar, Senior Mgr., Energy Resource Development, Snohomish Co. PUD

Collar said Snohomish PUD has been looking at tidal energy for about 1-1/2 to 2 years. Collar's responsibilities encompass all the renewable energy sources including solar and geothermal. He prefaced his remarks by saying "This is cutting-edge stuff. This isn't commercialized yet – the type of technology we're talking about – anywhere in the world. It never has been. What we're doing here in this region is actually one of the leading efforts in the country."

#### Why look at tidal energy?

Puget Sound is growing, so the power demands associated with growth continue to increase. Despite all the conservation efforts, which are very important, much new generation will be needed to meet demand. Also, in this state there is a renewable portfolio standard that requires utilities such as Snohomish PUD and Puget Sound Energy by the year 2020 to get 15 percent of their energy from renewable resources. This does not include traditional hydropower. Snohomish PUD currently gets about 85 percent of its energy from the federal Columbia River system. Snohomish PUD needs to add about 140 megawatts of new renewable energy, enough to run a city the size of Bellingham. This cannot come from dams; it has to be wind, solar, tidal, geothermal or other renewable sources. Many people ask why not harvest more wind power, but this is problematical because wind is unpredictable and the best sources of wind power are located in central and eastern Washington, far from the Puget Sound population centers that need it. Tidal energy is appealing because it is clean, renewable and predictable, and is located close to the Puget Sound population centers. "The big hitter for tidal energy, unlike wave and wind, is that it is predictable," Collar said. "You pretty much know how much energy you're going to get and

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when you're going to get it. For utility planners that is huge." Energy planners estimate that, realistically, wave and tidal energy could ultimately produce about 10 percent of the nation's power. This is about as much as is currently provided by traditional hydropower, so it is very significant.

## **Snohomish PUD's tidal energy initiative**

In the United States, the licensing of tidal energy sites is done by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). Snohomish PUD was awarded licenses to pursue development of seven sites in Puget Sound, but later surrendered two of them (Rich and Agate passages) after concluding they were not viable. The remaining sites are the channels north and south of San Juan Island, Guemes Channel north of Anacortes, Deception Pass and Admiralty Inlet. For now Snohomish is focusing solely on one site – Admiralty Inlet. Rather than develop multiple sites, the PUD will develop a small-scale pilot plant at Admiralty Inlet. They will use the knowledge gained from this pilot project in evaluating whether to later expand the Admiralty Inlet site with additional generators and develop other sites. The whole purpose is to gather data and answer some of the unanswered questions about the economic, technical, social and environmental liabilities.

## **Admiralty Inlet pilot project**

The proposed site of the Admiralty Inlet pilot plant is about 1 km WNW of Admiralty Head, not far from the ferry terminal. Collar described the top five of about 50 tidal energy technologies currently available, all of which work essentially as underwater windmills. Clean Current and Open Hydro are the two companies whose technologies are of greatest interest to Snohomish PUD, with Open Hydro likely to be the ultimate choice. Open Hydro is an Irish Company that purchased American technology developed in partnership with the Navy. Snohomish PUD would start by placing one, or possibly several, utility-scale devices on the bottom. They would sit on a gravity base so there would be no need to drill into the seabed. Depth would be about 30 meters below the surface, so marine traffic could easily pass above. The hulls of large ships extend about 10 meters deep. The fiberglass blades of the tidal generators would turn at about 10 RPM, and would generate electricity when the tide is running in or out. Based on observations elsewhere in the world where prototype devices have been deployed, fish and marine mammals simply avoid them. There appears to be no evidence of injury to marine life. Open Hydro has installed several of these generators already in the Orkney Islands north of Scotland. In choosing the specific site in Admiralty Inlet, Snohomish selected an area outside the main shipping channel and north of the ferry route where the depth was sufficient, currents were high and the bottom was largely scoured of life. Because this site is relatively close to shore, it is easier to serve logistically with cables and such. Collar said the Navy is also pursuing a tidal energy generation project on opposite side of Admiralty Inlet, near its Indian Island facility.

## **Unanswered questions**

Collar pointed out that Deception Pass has higher tidal velocities than Admiralty Inlet but would be a tough site to develop for a first deployment because of turbulence and its potential effects on equipment. Collar said many technical issues remain to be answered. Can you do this reliably and sustainably? Can you do it economically? Can you overcome corrosion, fouling and overall costs? Obviously there are a tremendous number of stakeholders in Puget Sound. "No one has ever permitted one of these before, so how do you actually get this licensed?" Then there are many environmental questions, such as direct impacts on fish and marine mammals. And there are wider scale impacts: What might the effects be on water quality, mixing, tidal exchange, etc.? Collar estimates the cost of manufacturing and installing three of these devices would be about

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\$10 million. He anticipates the earliest the pilot project could go into the water is about two to three years from now.

## NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

**Calendar year 2008 financial report.** Porter shared a one-page budget summary as of Dec. 31, 2008, the halfway point in the fiscal year, indicating we have about 59 percent of our \$106,700 annual budget remaining. We are spending funds against 10 tasks and cannot carry over the surplus to the next fiscal year. Porter pointed out we had allocated \$2,000 to Task 9, Estuary Seining, but this project has not generated the anticipated expenses. He suggested instead that we divert some of the seining funds toward a request from Whidbey Watershed Stewards to help sponsor a spawning survey count on Maxwellton Creek. For Task 10, the University of Washington Keystone project, we had allocated \$2,000 to a marine water quality study. Last year our UW project centered around adaptive management for salmon recovery. This year we had intended to look at the marine science side of marine water quality and what it means to Island County. However, the UW environmental programs currently are undergoing reorganization. At present they have a shortage of students to participate in this project. The proposed project involves writing a plan and then carrying out an assessment. Our liaison at the UW has requested we postpone the assessment until next year, when she expects more students to be available to work on it, freeing some of these funds to be used elsewhere. Porter suggests we redirect most of these funds toward our Administrative and Shore Stewards tasks. **Motion by Kind, second by Weber, to reduce Task 10 as recommended by the UW Graduate Program and apply the balance of the original \$2,000 to other tasks. Carried unanimously.**

**Recognition resolution. Motion by Kind, adopted by acclamation: Whereas Tom Campbell was one of the founding members of the Island County Marine Resources Committee; Whereas, he is the first member to complete three full terms on the committee; Whereas, he was an articulate advocate for the resource and especially for sport fishers; Whereas, he injected a bit of humor into the meetings; Whereas, he served on the executive committee and as chairman of the committee for two years; Therefore, be it resolved that Tom Campbell is granted the status of Island County Marine Resources Committee Curmudgeon Emeritus with all the rights, duties and privileges pertaining thereto.**

**Election of officers. Motion by Kind, second by Weber, to elect the following slate of individuals as MRC officers for 2009: Chair Ian Jefferds, vice-chair Joe Hillers, NWSC Representative Rex Porter, NWSC alternate Hi Bronson. Carried unanimously.**

**Whidbey Lyceum funding request.** On behalf of the Whidbey Lyceum lecture series, Nancy Waddell presented a request for \$500 to fund printing of the 2009 program booklet. Every spring the series runs for six consecutive Tuesdays, primarily in April, and attracts top speakers on the environment and Puget Sound. Sponsors are The Whidbey Institute, Whidbey Watershed Stewards, WSU Extension - Island County, Whidbey Audubon and the Marine Resources Committee. **Motion by Weber, second by Slinden, to allocate \$500 from the MRC's Community Advisory task budget to fund printing of the Whidbey Lyceum program booklet. Carried unanimously.** Waddell also expressed the hope that an MRC member will step forward to take Tom Campbell's place as our organization's representative on the Lyceum committee.

## LEADERSHIP REPORTS

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**Feldman – county lead.**

**WSU Extension budget:** Feldman reported that the 2009 budget for WSU Extension is down about 26 percent. The office will hold a large strategic planning event in February and hopes to have MRC representation. “What we want to make sure of, as the Puget Sound Partnership comes on line and as the MRC continues in the future, is that we don’t lose sight of the agriculture and forestry interests that come to bear on nearshore issues. Right now those are the programs that have been hit the hardest.” In preserving Beach Watchers and Shore Stewards she said she wants to make sure we aren’t sacrificing those other interests. Feldman said all employment searches at the university are now frozen so she is likely to remain interim director for some time.

**WDFW letter regarding Marine Protected Areas.** Feldman said she spoke today with Brie Van Cleve of the State Department of Fish and Wildlife, regarding a letter our MRC had received inviting us to provide input to a work group reviewing the state’s marine protected areas. Van Cleve said the most helpful input our group could provide would be to help with recommendations to further integrate local governments and non-governmental organizations into the establishment and management of Marine Protected Areas. Feldman shared copies of the state’s letter, inviting members to provide input directly to the work group at [vancfbv@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:vancfbv@dfw.wa.gov) or to attend the next meeting of the work group in Olympia in February.

**Porter – executive director.**

**Ruckelshaus meeting.** Porter reported that Don Meehan is setting up a private meeting of Beach Watchers and Extension representatives with Mary Ruckelshaus following her Sound Waters keynote address, and hopes that representatives of the MRC also will participate.

**Puget Sound Georgia Basin Conference scholarships.** Porter reported that at least four representatives of the MRC would like to attend the conference – Porter, Hillers, Sarah Schmidt and Frances Wood (on behalf of the Pigeon Guillemot project). He said the Northwest Straits Commission is offering \$600 to each MRC to help defray attendance expenses. Advance registration at the nonprofit rate is \$200 for the entire conference. Accommodations and meals are additional. Porter suggested the MRC contribute \$200 from the Administrative Budget in addition to the \$600 from the MRC to pay registration costs for all four individuals. **Motion by Kind, second by Toft, for the MRC to contribute \$200 from the Administration budget, in addition to \$600 from the NWSC, to pay registration costs for four individuals to attend the Puget Sound Georgia Basin Conference. Carried unanimously.**

**PUBLIC INPUT:** None.

**ADJOURNMENT:** There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:30 pm.

<b>MRC Meetings and Events</b>		
3:30 – 5:30 pm, first and third Tuesdays, Commissioners’ Hearing Room B-102 in <u>Coupeville</u>		
<b>Jan. 20</b>	<b>Tue</b>	<b>Business meeting.</b>
<b>Feb 3</b>	<b>Tue</b>	<b>Educational meeting. Beach Watcher presentation on MRC seining task results for 2008 and plans for 2009</b>
<b>Feb 17</b>	<b>Tue</b>	<b>Business meeting. Discussion of 2010 – 2011 MRC work plan</b>
<b>Mar 3</b>	<b>Tue</b>	<b>Educational meeting. To be determined</b>
<b>Mar 17</b>	<b>Tue</b>	<b>Business meeting</b>
<b>Apr 7</b>	<b>Tue</b>	<b>Educational meeting. Northwest Straits presentation on forage fish and related nearshore data integration results for Island County and Puget Sound</b>