

ISLAND COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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Minutes

Prepared by Anna Toledo

January 19, 2016

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

PRESENT: Elsa Schwartz, Vice-Chair, presiding, Ed Adams, Barbara Bennett, Leal Dickson, Lois Farrington, Ed Halloran, Linda Rhodes, Ruth Richards, Kestutis Tautvydas, David Thomson, Anthony Turpin, Tim Lawrence, WSU Extension Island County (non-voting), Lori Clark County Lead – Island County Department of Natural Resources Manager (non-voting), **ABSENT:** Florian Graner, Richard Hannold, Anna Toledo, Stan Walsh, France Wood, Todd Zackey

VISITORS: Jim Somers (Whidbey Camano Land Trust), Wade Crouch (Jefferson MRC), Dawn Pucci (Lead Entity), Cheryl Lowe (Jefferson MRC), Al Bergstein (Jefferson MRC)

CALL TO ORDER: Schwartz called the meeting to order at 3:30 pm. **INTRODUCTIONS:** Introductions were done. **QUORUM:** A quorum was declared. **AGENDA:** Tautvydas moved to approve the agenda. Rhodes seconded. The agenda was approved. **MINUTES:** Dickson moved to approve the minutes of the Island County MRC meeting held on January 5, 2016. Bennett seconded. The minutes were approved. **CORRESPONDENCE:** No correspondence.

WHIDBEY CAMANO LAND TRUST SHORELINE PROJECTS

Schwartz introduced Jessica Larson, Land Steward with Whidbey Camano Land Trust (WCLT). Larson presented on a mixture of projects that are already under management as well as new projects. The projects encompass 3,351 acres of tidelands and 53,426 feet of shoreline.

Projects:

1. Dugualla Flats: Northeast Whidbey. Freshwater restoration site on old diked farmland. This was conducted as off-site mitigation for an Island County project. There is also a proposed Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project (PSNERP) for breaking the old dike at this site, which is separate from the WCLT project.
2. Dugualla Heights: Northeast Whidbey. Originally a project to install a self-regulating tidegate to allow for fish passage. However there was not 100% landowner willingness, so WCLT dropped the tidegate plans. The modified plans are for wetland improvement by increasing shore plant diversity and adding slope to the edges to increase amphibian and bird diversity. This is planned for completion this year.
3. Dugualla Bay Preserve: Northeast Whidbey. Off-site mitigation for Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) work on Camano Bridge. WSDOT will elevate Dike Road to 17' and then breach the old dike to increase salt marsh area. WSDOT purchased adjacent terraced upland for access. They will maintain plantings for 10 years, and then transfer the area to WCLT.

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4. Waterman shoreline: Southeast Whidbey. Plan to remove creosoted bulkhead through WA DNR's creosote removal program. The trail down to the beach will be closed in anticipation of the bulkhead removal. The preserve encompasses large wetlands and small streams, as well as important feeder bluff area.
5. Glendale shoreline: Southeast Whidbey. Goals are to create public beach access and remove a boat launch and decrepit pier through WA DNR's creosote removal program. They have already demolished 2 old buildings at the site and will convert to parking and picnic areas. They will retain concrete armoring to protect Humphry Road access for southern neighbors. This project has involved lots of landowner outreach and engagement.
6. Barnum Point: Northeast Camano. A protection project currently underway. WCLT acquired 35.5 acres adjacent to County property. There may be the possibility for acquisition of an additional 17 acres, with the option to convert the site to a County park.
7. Pearson: Southeastern Whidbey. Still in acquisition phase. The area encompasses about 49 acres and has a switchback road for beach access. There is potential partnership opportunity with the County to create a County park.
8. Livingston Bay: Southeast Camano. WCLT received grant funding for acquisition and then restoration of diked farmland. The restoration work was not able to be completed due to lack of landowner willingness, though some landowners are showing more interest, so there may be potential for future work.

PROJECT IDEAS WITH JEFFERSON COUNTY MRC

Cheryl Lowe, Jefferson County MRC Coordinator, along with Chair, Al Bergstein and member Wade Crouch expressed interest in identifying areas for potential collaboration with the Island County MRC. Areas discussed included:

- Education and outreach, including the use of social media, time-lapse photography of restoration sites, geocaching, and text messaging services to receive information at a project location
- Forage fish sampling
- Kelp monitoring
- Stormwater treatment / phytoremediation
- Eelgrass monitoring and protection
- Nearshore restoration projects
- Messaging on the Pt. Townsend-Coupeville ferry about MRC work and/or pertinent key topics to share with the general public

Jefferson County MRC is committed to conduct one social media project this year, and would be interested in collaborating. One potential area would be around crab pot loss, modeled after Snohomish County MRC's social media campaign. This could be targeted during tourist season to reach a wider audience.

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Both MRCs are interested in working together, and will continue thinking about ways to collaborate as projects are developed.

BUSINESS ITEMS

Retreat: The MRC retreat is scheduled for March 15th on Camano Island, with a tentative timeframe of 2-6 pm. Ginny Broadhurst and Caroline Gibson will be co-facilitating. The Executive Committee will be planning the retreat, but members are welcome to provide input.

Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference: The Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference is scheduled for April 13-15 in Vancouver, BC. The MRC budget is able to cover the cost for Toledo to attend. The Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) is able to cover the registration costs for one person from each MRC. Schwartz and Bennett both expressed interest in attending.

Project Points of Contact: Schwartz reminded members to review the table Toledo sent out highlighting leadership opportunities, and consider areas of interest. Members are welcome to suggest additional topics if they have an interest that is not represented.

NWSC GRANT REPORTS:

Forage Fish Monitoring: Ruth Richards and Dan Matlock have been leading groups of volunteers at four locations - Waterman Property, Cornet Bay, Ala Spit and Camano Island State Park for 2+ months. They've done a thorough shake-down of equipment, and crews are becoming comfortable with the protocol. There is now an agreement between Island County and Dan Penttila, Salish Sea Biological, so presence/absence and staging analysis of samples can proceed. Bulkhead removal at Waterman is scheduled for next month; this will likely have a significant impact on access to the beach. Richards noted that the NWSC likes to receive photos of MRC work. Photos can be sent to Toledo, who can use them for the MRC website and pass them along to the NWSC for use in their newsletter and on social media.



Sampling at Cornet Bay 12/30/15.

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Seining:

Cornet Bay: The sampling schedule for this year is set, beginning with the 1st sampling on January 22. A training session with Anna Kagley (NOAA Fisheries) will also occur on the 1st sampling day.

Waterman site: Due to difficult logistics for moving equipment & the steep, eroding access trail, plans to monitor the Waterman site have been canceled.

Shoreline Restoration:

Cornet Bay:

1 - Maintenance Pier - Lisa Kaufman, Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF), is working on wrapping up the review of documents for the Marine Maintenance Pier feasibility and design. She is also looking over the budget to see if the geotech studies can be squeezed in, but it may need to wait until NWSF gets more funding for final design and construction. There is a possibility that Parks may be interested in finding funding now to replace the whole pier. Kaufman is working on connecting with someone to discuss this further.

2 - Planting - Kaufman has met with Sue Madsen from Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group (SFEG) to discuss planting Areas 1&3. Tentative planting dates will be either late February or mid-March. She also wanted to be sure there is a longer term plan for maintenance and monitoring of the plants for all the areas. There is funding at least through June 2017 to support this, but she'd like to see about nurturing the plants for a couple more years after that. She and Sue are thinking about assembling a stewardship team to monitor and maintain the plants, possibly with the help of volunteers from Sound Water Stewards, Deception Pass Foundation and MRC, under the guidance of SFEG staff.

According to SFEG's plant maintenance report, lots of extra planting helped to increase plant density and therefore reduce predation, plus some deer fencing seems to be helping with the survival rates. The Grindelia (gumweed) has been doing quite well, but when it's not flowering lots of people think it's a weed. The dune grasses have taken off; the shrubs need to catch up.

OTHER REPORTS:

NW Straits Commission / Foundation:

Commission: The NWSC is meeting on Friday, January 29th at the Pacific Rim Institute in Coupeville. MRC members are welcome to attend.

Foundation: The next Foundation Board meeting is February 11th. The Foundation staff submitted nine proposals for Near-Term Actions (NTAs) to the Puget Sound Partnership by the end of December due date. The end-of-year appeal resulted in over \$13,000 in donations. A new and improved website is under construction. No date for when this will be completed, but the effort has begun.

Kelp Monitoring: Lucas Hart (NWSC) has planned a safety committee meeting for this year's surveys. One of the principal outcomes from the 2015 effort was recognition for increased awareness & training for boating safety during surveys. Linda Rhodes will give a Sound Waters University session on the 2015 bull kelp surveys conducted by the 7 MRCs.

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Salmon TAG: Dawn Pucci reported that they are meeting with the Stillaguamish Tribe and Lead Entity to identify a strategy for prioritizing bulkhead removals. Pucci encouraged an MRC member to participate in the Salmon TAG. Thomson expressed interest.

LEADERSHIP REPORTS:

Chair: Schwartz reminded new members of the new member orientation on February 2nd from 1-3:30pm.

County Lead: Clark reported that their meeting for the Iverson stakeholder integration project on Camano went well and had a great turnout. The goal of the project is to gather and integrate input from homeowners regarding the potential for habitat restoration at Iverson Preserve.

County Commissioners: No report.

COMMUNITY COMMENT FORUM AND Q&A FROM THE PUBLIC: No comment.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business and no further comments, the meeting adjourned at 5:11 pm.