

# ISLAND COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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## Minutes

Prepared by Anna Toledo

# February 16, 2016

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

**PRESENT:** Frances Wood, Chair, presiding, Ed Adams, Barbara Bennett, Leal Dickson, Lois Farrington, Florian Graner, Ed Halloran, Linda Rhodes, Elsa Schwartz, Kestutis Tautvydas, David Thomson, Anthony Turpin, Jill Wood representing Richard Hannold, Island County Commissioner (non-voting), Anna Toledo MRC Coordinator (staff) **ABSENT:** Lori Clark, Ruth Richards, Stan Walsh, Tim Lawrence, Todd Zackey

**VISITORS:** Caroline Gibson (Northwest Straits Foundation), Lenny Corin (Northwest Straits Foundation), Dawn Pucci (Island County Salmon Recovery)

**CALL TO ORDER:** Frances Wood called the meeting to order at 3:30 pm.

**INTRODUCTIONS:** Introductions were done. Jill Wood, Environmental Health Director, noted that Commissioner Hannold has a conflict with MRC meetings, and has requested that she or Keith Higman, Health Services Director, will be attending meetings as his representative.

**QUORUM:** A quorum was declared. **AGENDA:** Frances Wood requested that an update from the Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) by Caroline Gibson and Lenny Corin be added to the agenda under "Business Items." Schwartz moved to approve the agenda as amended. Tautvydas seconded. The agenda as amended was approved. **MINUTES:** Bennett moved to approve the minutes of the Island County MRC meeting held on January 19, 2016. Halloran seconded. The minutes were approved. Dickson moved to approve the minutes of the Island County MRC meeting held on February 2, 2016. Tautvydas seconded. The minutes were approved.

**CORRESPONDENCE:** No correspondence.

### BUSINESS ITEMS

**Northwest Straits Foundation Update (Caroline Gibson and Lenny Corin):** Gibson announced that Joan Drinkwin will be leaving the NWSF on April 30<sup>th</sup>. She has done phenomenal work for the NWSF and has supported the Island County MRC in addition to the other MRCs. Her position will not be filled immediately. In the short-term, Lisa Kaufman and Jason Morgan will pick up the work around derelict gear removal and shoreline restoration. Kaufman will be the designated liaison between the NWSF and Island County MRC. Corin is also available to serve as a liaison.

As of today, the NWSF has approved an MRC Citizen Science Opportunity Fund. This is a designated fund which MRCs can apply to for up to \$10,000 per year. Priority will be given to projects that: 1. Demonstrate meaningful connection to marine conservation and restoration; 2. Involve at least one other MRC; 3. Leverage additional resources. The application is being developed, and is planned to be distributed in June.

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The NWSF received a grant to develop a new website which will be ready to go live in a couple weeks.

The NWSF also received a grant for a kelp coordinator, who will lead the efforts in the revision of the monitoring protocol, safety training, and retaining data from all the MRCs. This position will work closely with Lucas Hart, Jason Morgan, and the MRC kelp teams. The position will most likely run from May-September. Gibson will send more information as the position details are finalized.

A fundraiser gala is being developed, and will most likely be scheduled for late spring. The event will include a cocktail hour, presentation, and silent auction.

Graner asked if the NWSF could help host a database of photos that the MRC could upload to and download from as needed, for presentations or other outreach opportunities. The Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) currently has an online database of photos which MRCs can view but not download, to ensure photos are properly credited. Gibson will follow-up with Sasha Horst at the NWSC to see if there is a solution for MRCs to be able to easily access and share photos within an MRC.

**2015-2016 Grant Projects:** Toledo reviewed current projects listed in the 2015-2016 grant, and estimated budgets for each project:

1. Forage Fish: Monitoring presence/absence of forage fish eggs at 4 Island County beaches associated with current, future, or potential restoration projects.  
Budget: \$2,500, for analysis and QA/QC  
MRC Lead: Ruth Richards
2. Eelgrass: Aerial photography and underwater videography to measure eelgrass beds in Island County.  
Budget: \$1,000 for equipment updates and repairs, and gas for boat  
MRC Lead: Kes Tautvydas
3. Seining: Monitoring population presence and density of salmonids at Cornet Bay restoration project.  
Budget: \$2,000 for permits and analysis  
MRC Lead: Kes Tautvydas
4. Pigeon Guillemot: Monitoring breeding habits of pigeon guillemots.  
Budget: \$4,200 for summer research intern to conduct in-depth study  
MRC Lead: Frances Wood
5. Bull Kelp: Monitoring extent and density of kelp beds through boat-based surveys.  
Budget: \$1,000 for equipment and analysis  
MRC Lead: Linda Rhodes

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6. Kelp Harvest Outreach: Partnering with Whidbey Watershed Stewards to develop educational messaging around sustainable kelp harvesting and the ecological importance of kelp forests.  
Budget: \$3,000 for outreach materials  
MRC Lead: Linda Rhodes
7. Phytoremediation: Partner with Whidbey Island Conservation District to conduct water quality monitoring at phytoremediation sites before and after installation.  
Budget: \$1,500 originally planned for monitoring. Due to uncertainty of phytoremediation site implementation, funds should be re-evaluated for alternative use.  
MRC Lead: Ed Adams
8. Restoration – Cornet Bay: Partner with NWSF to coordinate native vegetation planting and monitoring following restoration construction.  
Budget: \$7,500 for vegetation planting and maintenance, and monitoring plan  
MRC Lead: Ruth Richards

**Future projects and project selection:** Toledo requested that members come to the retreat prepared to share project ideas for the next workplan. Projects should have a clear objective and address MRC and NWS Initiative goals. Ongoing projects should be evaluated from year to year, and should address why continued work is important. MRC members should be invested and interested in the project, and each project should have an MRC lead. When partnering with other organizations, it is important to identify what the MRC uniquely brings to the project.

**Retreat:** Frances Wood announced that the MRC retreat will be held from 12:30-5pm on March 15<sup>th</sup> on Camano. MRC members should meet at Camano Island State Park at 12:30pm with a sack lunch. After lunch and brief field trip at Camano Island State Park, participants will move to Cama Beach State Park for the remainder of the retreat.

In preparation for the retreat, project leads are being asked to provide a brief (up to 8 minutes) presentation about current projects at the March 1<sup>st</sup> MRC meeting.

The goals of the retreat will be for members to get to know each other, to conduct big-picture visioning, and to identify potential projects for the next year's workplan.

**Coordinator's Update:** No further updates.

## NWSC GRANT REPORTS:

**Forage Fish Monitoring:** Lois Farrington has joined this project as co-lead. Thank you, Lois! Dan Penttila has analyzed the November samples, and found surf smelt eggs in two samples from Camano Island State Park.

Volunteers are building their skill level, so the team has increasing confidence in the consistency of the data. The team could use a few more Whidbey volunteers; Camano volunteers are enthusiastic and numerous!

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Ala Spit continues to change notably. There was significant accumulation of woody debris along the restoration site in January. MRC members are encouraged to stop by there and check it out. Sand lance eggs were found at Ala Spit from the December and January samples.



*Ala Spit*

**Seining:** The seining training hosted by NWSF and Island County Lead Entity on January 22nd was well-received. Several new volunteers, along with lots of experienced volunteers attended. Jason Morgan (NWSF) will be developing a survey to send to participants to continue to improve the training each year. Seining at Cornet Bay is scheduled every other week on Friday mornings through June. They have not noticed much salmon so far.

Jim Somers, seining project lead, and Jack Hartt, Deception Pass State Park Manager, are collaborating to provide more outreach around the seining project. They plan to post their seining dates at announcement boards around the Park, and have volunteers available during seining events to provide information to the general public about the project.

## **Shoreline Restoration:**

### *Cornet Bay:*

Marine Maintenance Pier: State Parks is reconsidering whether NWSF/State Parks should be looking at full replacement rather than just the retrofit of the beginning section of the pier. Lisa Kaufman (NWSF) had the consultants from PND provide a rough estimate for extending the design work and geotech work and it basically doubles what has been spent to date. Parks is looking at this and Kaufman will revisit it after that. They would likely have to request a direct appropriation from the legislature to fund the replacement. But, the partial replacement did score well in the Island Local Integration Organization (ILIO) Near-Term Action (NTA) process and did not require any edits.

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Areas 1 & 3: The restoration site looks great and continues to accumulate new large woody debris and a healthy looking wrack line! Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group is looking at Saturday, March 19<sup>th</sup> as a possible volunteer planting and weeding day. When that is firmed up, Kaufman will pass on the specifics so the MRC can help recruit volunteers. The planting will also include some maintenance at the Phase One area as needed.

*Site north of Langley (identified through NWSF Shoreline Armoring Reduction Program):* NWSF had a site visit with most of the permitting agencies recently for the armor/barge removal at this site, and received positive feedback about the project. The site was identified through the shoreline landowner workshop two years ago and is moving towards permitting and hopefully construction. Both this and Maylor's Point were submitted as NTAs and both were ranked with a score of 1 out of 3 (1 being the highest) so minimal updates were required for the final submittals.

**Kelp Monitoring and Outreach:** Lucas Hart (NWSC) organized a safety committee meeting, and it has come up with several action items: 1) Determine skills & equipment that participants must have. 2) Identify skills that trip leaders should have. 3) Compile pre-trip safety checklist (e.g., weather conditions currents). 4) Organize a training session on basics of kayaking, including an orientation for trip leaders to assess their volunteers' fitness.

Updates on the kelp harvest outreach project are listed below in conjunction with the Smith & Minor Island Aquatic Reserve (SMIAR) update.

Bennett and Graner indicated they are interested in helping on the kelp projects.

## OTHER REPORTS:

### **Northwest Straits Commission/Foundation:**

Commission: The January 29<sup>th</sup> meeting summary was distributed to MRC members electronically. Approved minutes from NWSC meetings can be found online: <http://www.nwstraits.org/archive/>

Foundation: No further updates.

**Salmon TAG:** The next Salmon TAG meeting is February 17<sup>th</sup>. Thomson has offered to represent the MRC on this committee.

## FUTURE REPORT ADDITIONS:

The additional reports listed on the agenda will be phased into regular report updates.

Creosote Removal: Turpin has done some initial research and planning, and will connect with Thomson, Kaufman, and Ken Urstad to work out a plan for identifying creosote for removal. Turpin will also be in touch with Matt Klope regarding outreach strategies.

Smith & Minor Island Aquatic Reserve: The SMIAR Citizen Committee holds regular monthly meetings on the 3rd Wednesday at 6:30pm in Coupeville, usually in the United Methodist Church basement. In addition to the kelp/macroalgae harvest assessment (see below), a seabird disturbance survey is being conducted this year. It is an extension of a 2014 survey to

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characterize how seabirds are affected by human activities within the reserve, both on the water & on the beach. For details, go to: <http://whidbeywatersheds.org/stewardship/aquatic-reserve-watch/>.

*Kelp/macroalgae harvest assessment (in collaboration with Whidbey Watershed Stewards & WA Dept. of Natural Resources):*

It is off-season for assessment now. Sam Payne, one of the Puget SoundCorps workers with WA DNR wrote a great report summarizing the 2015 efforts to assess the effects of harvest at Libbey Beach & the impacts of sustainable vs unsustainable harvest techniques. Toledo distributed the report electronically to MRC members.

WA DNR obtained substantial funding for Aquatic Reserve activities, & some of that funding will support a staff person at the Sedro-Woolley office for the 4 northern Aquatic Reserves.

## LEADERSHIP REPORTS

**Chair:** No report.

**County Lead:** No report.

**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 5:25 pm.