

ISLAND COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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Minutes

Prepared by Anna Toledo

May 3, 2016

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

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

VISITORS: Ken Urstad (Sound Water Stewards), Chris Robertson (presenter, Department of Natural Resources), Dick Toft (observer)

CALL TO ORDER: Wood called the meeting to order at 3:33 pm. **INTRODUCTIONS:** Introductions were done. **QUORUM:** A quorum was declared. **AGENDA:** Walsh moved to approve the agenda. Halloran seconded. The agenda was approved. **MINUTES:** Bennett moved to approve the minutes of the Island County MRC meeting held on April 19, 2016. Schwartz seconded. The minutes were approved.

CORRESPONDENCE: Toledo referenced the email and technical report she forwarded to the MRC from Blain Reeves regarding DNR's decision to authorize limited sand shrimp harvest in the East Whidbey Island Region. Reeves will be presenting to the MRC on June 7th.

EDUCATIONAL PRESENTATION: DNR CREOSOTE REMOVAL PROGRAM

Chris Robertson from Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) presented on their creosote and large marine debris removal program. Powerpoint presentation available:

http://www.islandcountymrc.org/uploads/pdf/Resources/2016-0419%20DNR%20Creosote_compressed_smaller.pdf

Discussion points included:

- Entities which have leaseholds with DNR for structures on the water are responsible for maintaining those structures. The Land Management office is able to send letters of enforcement and assess fees for not taking care of the structure. If they are put into unauthorized use, the creosote and debris removal program can be brought in to clean up.
- Individuals can report creosoted material and large marine debris directly to Robertson. This will get the material on a list for removal, and Robertson's team will work on removal when they are in the area. The crew is scheduled at least three months out.
- It is helpful for Robertson to receive information on the general area and number of creosoted logs that show up, even if there is not specific site information. This helps track generally where material is landing.

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- The MRC can assist in notifying partners and other groups of this program, and in conducting general outreach about the hazards of creosote.
- An awareness campaign could help provide a localized effort in identification of creosote for removal. Friends of the San Juans organized an effective mailing asking shoreline landowners to identify pilings for removal. Robertson has flyers and stock language that could be used for an outreach campaign.

ACTIONS/DECISIONS/FOLLOW-UP

- **Turpin** will coordinate with Robertson to develop a strategy for engaging the MRC in the efforts to identify creosote and large marine debris for removal.
- **Outreach Team** will explore ways to educate the public about the hazards of creosote and the DNR removal program.

BUSINESS ITEMS

Coordinator's Update (Toledo): Toledo asked project leads and points of contact if the format of submitting brief written updates prior to each MRC meeting has been helpful, and if they would like to continue in that format. In general, MRC members have found it to be useful.

Halloran moved to have project leads and points of contact continue to submit written updates for regularly scheduled project reports. Tautvydas seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Lori Clark and Dawn Pucci organized a watershed restoration tour for public officials, showcasing restoration work at Cornet Bay and Ala Spit, and proposed restoration at Maylor's Point. The MRC was highlighted at Cornet Bay, and the seining team provided a demonstration.

Several members noted they would not be able to attend the May 17th meeting. Toledo will send out an email the week prior to the meeting to verify there will be enough members in attendance for a quorum.

Rhodes, Walsh, and Bennett are on terms that expire June 30, 2016, as a result of a change in term length in 2012 to align with the funding cycle at that time. The MRC Operations and Procedures Resolution states that terms will run from January 1 to December 31. The Executive Committee recommended requesting that the Board of Island County Commissioners (BICC) bring the terms back into alignment with the Operations and Procedures Resolution, so the affected members' terms expire December 31, 2016. **Adams moved to ask the Commissioners through a letter to make the appointments consistent with the Resolution, running from January 1 to December 31. Schwartz seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

Adams reminded the MRC of 3 funding opportunities:

1. The Estuary & Salmon Restoration Program (ESRP) Small Grants Program is accepting proposals for \$50,000 - \$100,000 for work to be completed in 2017-2019.
2. The MRC Opportunity Fund through the Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) - \$10,000 available for each MRC. More information coming soon.
3. The Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) received money for forage fish work.

ACTIONS/DECISIONS/FOLLOW-UP

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- **Toledo** will email MRC members to check who will be available May 17th.
- **Toledo** and **Wood** will draft a letter to the Commissioners asking them to align the terms of MRC members whose terms are expiring in June with the term dates established in the MRC Operations and Procedures Resolution.
- **Toledo** will meet with **Richards, Schwartz, Clark, Pucci**, and Lisa Kaufman to discuss project ideas for the ESRP grant.
- **Richards** and **Farrington** will follow-up with NWSC on utilizing money they received for forage fish work.

NWSC GRANT REPORTS:

Eelgrass Monitoring (Tautvydas): The eelgrass team will have a planning meeting May 4th.

Seining (Tautvydas): Cornet Bay seining continues. The team conducted a demonstration seining for the watershed restoration tour organized by Island County DNR for public officials on Friday, April 29th. The next regularly scheduled seining is Friday, May 6th.

Pigeon Guillemot Survey (Wood): The guillemot survey coordinating team is busy preparing for volunteer training on May 4th. The team has selected a well-qualified candidate for the summer intern, Emily Terao. Emily has a degree in biology from Earlham College. Among other projects she has researched the composition of avian species in various habitats in Peru. She has studied avian genetics using DNA from feathers and blood. Emily was a conservation education intern at Fossil Rim Wildlife Center in Texas. Recently she relocated from Napa, CA to Whidbey Island where she is co-owner of Duck Duck Goose Farms near Freeland.

Wood presented on the pigeon guillemot project at the April 29th NWSC meeting, including plans for the 2016-2017 grant round. The team is looking to expand to Camano and work with other groups in the region interested in starting guillemot surveys. There was a lot of interest in the paper that will be published, the final version of which has been sent to Northwestern Naturalist.

Kelp Monitoring (Rhodes): 1. From Lucas Hart (NWSC): The protocol is undergoing revision, and collecting density measurements will no longer be included. Caroline Gibson is working on finalizing details for a kelp project coordinator, who will work for 5-6 months on multiple aspects of the kelp project. There are discussions about holding a kayak skills/ protocol/ GPS training day. Nothing has been planned as of yet.

A main objective of this year's survey is to better understand variation in kelp bed perimeter measurements. This could be achieved by having three kayakers survey the same bed at similar times. This can be discussed in more detail in the future as well. There is more interest in

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focusing on the Saratoga side, in beds that might be transient. It would be beneficial to monitor in areas where other monitoring efforts are occurring (forage fish, eelgrass, etc).

2. Vern Brisley fabricated a "pod" for Gregg Ridder's plane to synchronize an infrared camera with the visible light camera for ortho images. Vern also fabricated a rig to take dual oblique photos from Gregg's plane, which may be better for locating kelp. Test flight is planned for early May.



Gregg Ridder (left) & Vern Brisley (right) discussing the logistics of dual oblique imaging from Gregg's plane. (Photo: L. Rhodes)

3. Aerial images from 2015 are being examined for prospective sampling sites for 2016.

OTHER REPORTS:

Smith and Minor Island Aquatic Reserve - SMIAR (Rhodes): 1. The protocols for the kelp/macroalgae biomass study & the harvest impact study have been modified, and a calendar for target survey dates (May - July) has been developed for Libbey Beach. There will be additional efforts to visit the Hastie Lake launch site and the Swantown site on West Beach Road this year for harvest activities. Harvest at the State Park accesses (Fort Ebey & Joseph Whidbey) is restricted from April 15 - May 16 this year.

2. The Bird Disturbance Survey to collect data on human impacts on seabirds is already underway. Collection will continue throughout the summer.

3. Outreach & Education:

a. DNR will design and install "welcome" informational signs for all of the Reserves, which will be located at the access points to the Reserves. A draft sign design for Cherry Point was shown, and Betty Bookheim provided editing to customize it for Smith & Minor Island.

b. The SMIAR Citizen Stewardship Committee (CSC), which Rhodes is a part of, proposed construction of a kiosk at Libbey Beach for rotating or changeable displays about resources, research, and other dynamic information about SMIAR. For example, the updated bilingual brochure for kelp & macroalgae harvest would be an excellent poster for display during harvest

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season. Rick Baker recently collaborated with Island County Parks for signage at Robinson Beach, and he will pursue this opportunity for Libbey Beach, which is a County park.

c. The CSC also discussed "pop-up" signs that can be displayed when research or survey activities are being conducted. These signs can provide descriptions of the purpose and activities.

Salmon TAG (Thomson): No update.

Island Local Integrating Organization - ILIO (Bennett): The ILIO is looking ahead to the way Near-Term Actions (NTAs) will be assessed in the future, with the desire to focus on vital signs and components that are most relevant to Island County. The results of the survey which was circulated in April showed a preference for fewer components and more vital sign targets to create depth of support for each of the actions.

The funding strategy will have EPA provide approximately \$100,000/year for the next 5 years, pending funding appropriation levels, directly for NTA project implementation. The Puget Sound Partnership (PSP) website (<http://www.psp.wa.gov>) has been revitalized; updates and reports are readily accessible.

Sound Water Stewards - SWS (Farrington): On April 26, the SWS Board held their meeting on Camano Island to help coordinate with the Camano Island Steering Committee. All committees have good representation from Camano Island, and coordination with training and events is much improved. The Board increased the hours and responsibilities of paid staff to include project communications. Kelly Zupich will manage all requests for volunteers, notify project leads, and communicate requests to the membership. Any requests made through info@soundwaterstewards.com will automatically be received by Kelly.

The Project and Science Review Committee is developing improved methods for tracking and reporting volunteer participation and to assess the fulfillment of project commitments.

SWS is signing an agreement with State Parks which will allow for office and storage space at Fort Casey Lighthouse. In return, there will be greater involvement with interpretive programs for State Parks. Kathy Stetz is helping with development of interpretive programs and training for interested volunteers. Bennett noted that the wall elements of the display at the Coupeville Wharf will be installed on Friday.

The Class of 2016 has finished the spring training semester and is ready to volunteer for summer projects. They are eager and motivated!



SWS Training Class of 2016

Outreach (Bennett): Bennett has developed a suite of outreach strategies for the MRC, including:

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- creating outreach information for each project that could be handed out at the beach while volunteers are conducting monitoring work
- producing whitepapers on issues of importance
- identifying priority projects for creating short videos
- coordinating with NWSC on social media

LEADERSHIP REPORTS

Chair: No report.

County Lead: No report.

County Commissioners: Jill Wood reported that she connected with Commissioner Hannold about how the MRC and BICC can support each other. Commissioner Hannold would like to meet with the Executive Committee to talk about opportunities. He expects to be present at MRC meetings over the summer months, starting in June.

ACTIONS/DECISIONS/FOLLOW-UP

- **Toledo** will arrange time with Commissioner Hannold at a future Executive Committee meeting.

COMMUNITY COMMENT FORUM AND Q&A FROM THE PUBLIC: Lawrence passed around an invitation from the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community to their Annual Blessing of the Fleet & First Salmon Ceremony on May 12th at the Swinomish Youth Center.

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