

ISLAND COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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Minutes

Prepared by Anna Toledo

August 2, 2016

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

PRESENT: Frances Wood, Chair, presiding, Ed Adams, Barbara Bennett, Ed Halloran, Linda Rhodes, Anthony Turpin, Lori Clark County Lead – Island County Department of Natural Resources Manager (non-voting), Keith Higman representing Richard Hannold, Island County Commissioner (non-voting), Anna Toledo MRC Coordinator (staff) **ABSENT:** Lois Farrington, Florian Graner, Tim Lawrence, Ruth Richards, Elsa Schwartz, Kes Tautvydas, David Thomson, Stan Walsh, Todd Zackey

VISITORS: Rick Baker (Whidbey Watershed Stewards), Kathy Jacobson (DNR Aquatic Reserves), Randy Kline (State Parks)

CALL TO ORDER: Wood called the meeting to order at 3:32 pm. **INTRODUCTIONS:** Introductions were done. **QUORUM:** A quorum was not declared. **AGENDA, MINUTES:** The agenda and minutes were not approved as a quorum was not declared. **CORRESPONDENCE:** No correspondence.

EDUCATIONAL PRESENTATION: CLASSIFICATION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN (CAMP) PROCESS

Randy Kline, Parks Planner for Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission presented on the Classification and Management Planning (CAMP) process that State Parks is conducting at the 3 state park properties on South Whidbey: South Whidbey State Park, Useless Bay Property, and Possession Point State Park.

Presentation available online: http://www.islandcountymrc.org/uploads/pdf/Resources/2016-0802%20State%20Parks%20CAMP_compressed.pdf

Discussion points included:

- The CAMP process is occurring at several Parks. State Parks is currently looking at the properties in South Whidbey as concerns about the tree rot at South Whidbey SP triggered more focused planning.
- State Parks has held multiple community meetings to hear concerns and questions from local park users, present alternative approaches to address those concerns, and incorporate further feedback from the public. They are now developing a preliminary plan, which will be ready for review in winter 2016, and will be presented at a public workshop. Once final revisions are made to the plan, it will be presented to the Parks and Recreation Commission in winter 2016/2017.

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- SoundIQ can be used to look at eelgrass beds and other important habitat in Useless Bay and other areas. Toledo will also connect Kline with Gregg Ridder for more information about eelgrass in Useless Bay.
- State Parks is no longer proposing allowing concessions in Joseph Whidbey SP due to public input in opposition. Concessions are being considered for 2 parks: Fort Flagler and Millersylvania. Concessions would be in a character consistent with the park.
- Suggestion to add Shorelines as a land classification, as shorelines have specific issues and concerns unique to them.

BUSINESS ITEMS

Department of Ecology's Draft Amendments to the Shoreline Management Act (Rhodes):

Rhodes referenced the announcement that Department of Ecology is in the process of amending rules to the Shoreline Management Act (SMA):

<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/rules/1506ov.html>. One of the rules being amended is in regards to water-dependent uses, including finfish net pens. Ecology's narrative of their proposed amendment

(<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/rules/1506pdf/July15PrelimWaterDependentUses.pdf>) did not mention the scientific input provided by the MRC and Island County DNR demonstrating that much of the Island County shoreline would not be suitable for siting net pens.

Rhodes anticipates that Ecology will be using modeling strategies to determine suitable areas for net pen siting, and voiced uncertainty about how critical areas will be incorporated into the siting guidelines, and that the MRC should stay informed on the process.

Higman noted that the Board of Island County Commissioners (BICC) will likely ask the MRC for scientific advice in regards to net pens during the 2019 Shoreline Master Program (SMP) update. Providing comment to Ecology at this stage would allow for input on the rules which will guide the SMP update. Higman suggested multiple ways to engage in the conversation: provide comment as an MRC, work with other MRCs or the Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) to provide collective comment, bring the issue to the attention of the BICC and request they bring it to the association that lobbies on their behalf.

ACTIONS/DECISIONS/FOLLOW-UP

- **Toledo** will forward updates to the MRC from Ecology on the SMA update process.
- **Adams** will contact the NWSC about responding to the draft SMA amendments.

Coordinator's Update (Toledo): Toledo updated that she submitted the ESRP proposal for the feasibility study at Oak Harbor Marina.

Toledo updated the BICC on the membership vacancy on the MRC. In accordance with the Operations Resolution, which specifically denotes that the BICC will consider representation from a variety of stakeholders, including 2 Ports, they would like to have the Port of Coupeville provide a recommendation for appointment to the MRC. Toledo will work with the BICC to make contact with the Port of Coupeville.

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Bennett suggested the MRC could consider inviting Tom Leschine, former Director of the School of Marine and Environmental Affairs, to attend an MRC meeting and consider appointing him as a non-voting technical advisor.

Toledo received feedback from the NWSC on the 2016-2017 MRC grant proposal, and has worked with project leads to provide clarification where needed. The NWSC will review the revisions for any further questions or feedback.

Toledo asked project leads and points of contact to send her pictures of projects. They can be used by the NWSC on social media, and can be added to the MRC website, reports, and outreach materials to help tell the story of the MRC's work.

Wood expressed concerns over the recent diesel spill in Penn Cove, and suggested having Eric Brooks, IC Director of Emergency Management, speak to the MRC about how oil spill response works in Island County. Toledo announced that the San Juan LIO is organizing a workshop around oil spills and vessel traffic, and will be inviting MRC participation at the workshop. Toledo will pass along information as it is available. Turpin noted that the Navy also has major resources for oil spills.

ACTIONS/DECISIONS/FOLLOW-UP

- **Project leads** should send Toledo any pictures from projects.

NWSC GRANT REPORTS:

Eelgrass Monitoring (Tautvydas): Gregg Ridder completed aerial photography of eelgrass beds around Whidbey and Camano in June. On June 8th the first underwater videography of this year was completed at Freeland Park. However, Gregg found that no video data was recorded. Equipment failure was traced to a faulty battery, a faulty memory chip, and hiccups in the DVR. After replacing the battery and memory chip, and rerouting some of the wiring, videography surveys of the eelgrass beds were continued. By July 9 five areas were surveyed successfully including a rerun at Freeland Park. Because the DVR was still performing poorly, Gregg bought a new DVR and donated it to the project, which will be used on the last four eelgrass beds. The videography of the eelgrass beds is expected to be complete by August 10th. Albert Foster continues exploring the use of multi beam sonar for underwater surveys of eelgrass beds. He surveyed the entire bed, not just transect lines, in a couple of hours, in Holmes Harbor at Freeland Park in June and continues to assist Ken Urstad, Neal Clark, Gregg Ridder, et al. with the current equipment.

Seining (Tautvydas): The seining project at Cornet Bay is completed and will not be continued next year. Fish count for 2016 was more or less as expected except that the pink salmon count was only 17% of what was expected for an even year. Toledo is working with Dawn Pucci to have a contractor analyze this year's results and write a final report. Jim Somers, Pucci, Tautvydas, and Toledo met to discuss seining plans for the next year. It was decided not to seine at Ala Spit or other sites next year, and concentrate on having a thorough data analysis completed that would identify gaps and inform on best locations to monitor.

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Kelp Monitoring (Rhodes): Kayak survey season is in full swing. The team is collecting information from 5 sites around Island County, including 1 site that was monitored for 4 months last year. The sites are: Ebey's Landing, Ben Ure Island, Hoypus Point, Polnell Point, and Camano Island State Park. All sites will have data from 2 months; some from 3 months. 3 volunteers have returned from last year's effort, and on-the-water training was held for 2 more volunteers. One challenge has been making connections with prospective volunteers with kayaking experience.

Progress on higher aerial imaging is moving ahead. Trials of orthogonal (straight down) & oblique imaging with visible (RGB) & IR (infrared) photography look promising. The team is also trying to coordinate with lower aerial imaging (drone), with a goal of comparing area estimates from kayaks & the possibility of obtaining bulb densities.

OTHER REPORTS:

Smith and Minor Island Aquatic Reserve (Rhodes):

WA DNR has drafted a design for "welcome" signs describing the SMIAR. The signs are destined to be positioned at entry points, such as the Hastie Lake boat launch.

The informational kiosk supported by the MRC & the SMIAR citizen stewardship committee is moving forward. This kiosk will be located at Libbey Beach Park and will be able to hold interchangeable signage, to provide information for seaweed & kelp harvesters about sustainable practices, the aquatic reserve, & coordinated efforts such as the WCLT's adjacent tidelands. In coordination with Whidbey Watershed Stewards, a builder has been identified, & Island County Public Works will install.

Rhodes introduced Kathy Jacobson, the new North Puget Sound Aquatic Reserve Coordinator, who will be located at DNR's Sedro-Woolley office. Jacobson mentioned that she will be working on outreach and citizen science engagement. Jacobson invited all to check out the Aquatic Reserves website at aquaticreserves.org. Any feedback is welcome.

Storm Surge Monitoring (Tautvydas): No update.

Salmon TAG (Thomson): No update.

Island Local Integrating Organization (Bennett/Clark): Clark reported that ILIO is putting together pieces of their 5 year ecosystem recovery plan. The Technical Committee will be meeting the week of August 15th to make a recommendation to the Executive Committee on criteria to determine the recipient of the direct allocation funding. The LIOs will allocate \$100,000/year for 5 years to project sponsors according to this criteria. The allocation will be directly between the EPA and the project sponsor.

In November, it will be announced which projects will be funded regionally. There is \$5,000,000 per strategic initiative (shellfish, stormwater, habitat) available regionally.

Outreach (Bennett): The Executive Committee and Outreach Committee will be meeting in September to discuss conducting an outreach needs assessment, and developing outreach and evaluation strategies.

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Two signs developed by the MRC several years ago are in storage at Deception Pass State Park. Bennett will work with the Outreach Committee to provide recommendations for where those signs could be used.

LEADERSHIP REPORTS

Chair: Wood passed around an update on the elevated numbers of Rhinoceros Auklets being reported washing up on beaches in Puget Sound. Updates from the Coastal Observation and Seabird Survey Team (COASST) are available here:
<https://depts.washington.edu/coasst/news/news.html>

County Lead: Higman reported that the draft comprehensive plan will be available for public review by the end of the month, and encouraged the MRC, individually or collectively, to participate in the public review process.

Higman advised that the MRC cannot make decisions outside of an open public meeting, and suggested that if the MRC anticipates needing to provide letters of support in the time-frame between meetings, they could delegate the Chair, or the Chair with input from the Executive Committee, to make that decision. This topic would need to be brought forward in a motion at a regular MRC meeting.

ACTIONS/DECISIONS/FOLLOW-UP

- **The Executive Committee** will discuss options for handling letters of support between MRC meetings, and schedule for discussion at a future MRC meeting.

County Commissioners: No report.

COMMUNITY COMMENT FORUM AND Q&A FROM THE PUBLIC: Adams announced that Ginny Broadhurst will be resigning from NWSC. She expects to stay on through the MRC conference in November.

Bennett announced that all the elements of the new display at the Coupeville Wharf have been installed, and that a celebration will be held in September.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business and no further comments, the meeting adjourned at 5:35 pm