

ISLAND COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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Minutes

Prepared by Anna Toledo

November 15, 2016

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

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

VISITORS: Dick Toft (former MRC member)

CALL TO ORDER: Schwartz called the meeting to order at 3:30 pm. **INTRODUCTIONS:** Introductions were done. **QUORUM:** A quorum was declared. **AGENDA:** Bennett moved to approve the agenda. Tautvydas seconded. The agenda was approved. **MINUTES:** Tautvydas moved to approve the minutes of the Island County MRC meeting held on October 18, 2016. Richards seconded. The minutes were approved. **CORRESPONDENCE:** No correspondence.

BUSINESS ITEMS

Seining Opportunity at Dugualla Bay (Tautvydas, Dawn Pucci): Pucci presented the opportunity to conduct beach seining at Dugualla Bay, where Washington Department of Transportation recently completed a mitigation project to breach the old dike and restore habitat.

Seining would be conducted mid-January through mid-June, and Jim Somers has already received interest from 5-6 volunteers. Whidbey Camano Land Trust owns the land, and has given permission and encouragement to conduct seining there.

Pucci will be able to cover the cost of the state permit this year through the Lead Entity's budget. Pucci asked the MRC to consider planning to include this work in upcoming work plans and budgets for the next 3 years. The budget would be similar to the annual budget for seining at Cornet Bay, and should cover the permit cost and the cost to write a summary report each year.

Farrington spoke with WDFW, who expressed interested in having forage fish surveys conducted at Dugualla Bay. Additionally, Dugualla Bay is a historical site for Olympia Oyster. Farrington plans to investigate if it is suitable Olympia Oyster habitat and whether there are currently any present. This has to be done at a very low tide which is likely not feasible until mid-March.

Toledo, Pucci, Tautvydas, and Jim Somers participated in a call with the NWSC Science Advisory Committee regarding conducting a thorough data analysis of the Cornet Bay seining

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data, and how it ties into regional trends. The group will look into possibilities to have a grad student analyze the data to create a white paper.

Salmon TAG Update (Pucci): Dawn Pucci is the Island County Lead Entity Coordinator for Salmon Recovery. Each Lead Entity has a citizen's committee that produces a habitat project list each year. Historically, the Water Resources Advisory Committee (WRAC) has served as the citizen's committee in Island County. However, the WRAC does not meet statute requirements for the Lead Entity, and will also be focusing more on watershed planning. The existing Salmon Technical Advisory Group (TAG) was close to meeting statute requirements, but was missing a seat for business interests. A Resolution was proposed and approved by the Board of Island County Commissioners (BICC) to separate the Lead Entity responsibilities from the WRAC and establish the Island County Salmon Recovery Technical and Citizens Committee (SRTCC). This new committee will include many members from the former Salmon TAG, as well as additional seats. In total, there will be 19 voting seats as follows:

- Three (3) citizen members who are Island County residents and are interested in representing their communities' points of view with regards to fish resources and impacts. Efforts will be made to include one member from each of the County's distinct geographic areas,
- Four (4) members who are Island County residents and representatives of a group whose mission is in local natural resource sustainability through education, recreation and habitat protection or restoration,
- Two (2) members representing local business that are or would be affected by decisions made with regards to salmonid habitat resources interests,
- One (1) member representing local Conservation Districts,
- One (1) member representing Regional Fish Enhancement Groups,
- Two (2) members representing Island County government,
- One (1) representative from the Island County Council of Governments,
- Two (2) members representing State or Federal Governmental agencies, and
- One (1 each) representative each from the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community, Tulalip Tribes and the Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians.

The BICC will appoint individuals to the citizen, natural resource, and local business seats. The individuals filling the remaining seats will be chosen by their representative organizations. There have been 5 active natural resource groups on the TAG, and will be 4 voting seats for natural resource groups on the new SRTCC. The primary role of voting members is to score projects. Anyone is encouraged to attend, participate, and be a part of the discussions.

Thomson, who currently represents MRC on the TAG, expressed concerns that his skillset is not suited for the SRTCC, and offered to not take one of the voting seats. Pucci contended that Thomson's perspective and project management experience is a valuable addition to the group.

Given that there is one more natural resource group than voting seat, the MRC's options are:

1. Ask to have Thomson stay on as a voting member
2. Ask another MRC member to be considered for a voting seat

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3. Not have an MRC member in a voting seat, but with the understanding that the MRC could still participate in meetings and discussions, and would be reconsidered when a natural resources voting seat opened up

The MRC expressed a desire to maintain a voting seat on the new committee, and Thomson offered to remain on the committee as a voting member.

Conference Debrief (All): Conference highlights and feedback:

- Great chance to meet other MRCs, get to know each better
- Learned a lot about ocean acidification in Puget Sound – the presentation was excellent and demonstrated thorough research
- Would have liked to hear more about what projects other MRCs are doing
- The sessions about the structure and history of the Northwest Straits Initiative (NWSI) were helpful. Highly recommend continuing to offer those.
- Fundraising session: Caroline Gibson is finding that NWSI goals do not always align with potential donors' targets. It is important to engage with the community so individuals start recognizing the importance and impact of our work.
- Think big!
- It would have been nice to have an update from each MRC about their accomplishments that year.

2017 Jan Holmes Island County Coastal Volunteer of the Year Award (Halloran, Toledo):

Halloran worked with Derek Pritchard (Sound Water Stewards) and Tim Lawrence (WSU Extension) to create and refine nomination criteria and a public announcement soliciting nominations for the award. Toledo worked with the group to streamline the nomination form.

The press release announcing the call for nominations will be distributed mid-late November. Submissions will be due early January. It was suggested to move the nomination deadline to January 11th to allow for more time after the holidays.

Coordinators Update (Toledo)

- Conference reimbursement forms: Contact Toledo for reimbursement forms for the MRC conference. Members can be reimbursed for mileage, ferry costs, and lodging. Food was provided during the conference so any food purchases are not eligible for reimbursement.
- MRC Opportunity Fund: Toledo submitted the application for two projects: \$7,000 for outreach; \$3,000 for pigeon guillemot coordinator. The fund committee will review and rank all the submitted projects. Not all projects may be funded, and not all MRCs may receive equal amounts of funding based on which projects are selected for funding.
- Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program (ESRP) update: The Oak Harbor Marina Restoration Feasibility Project was ranked 16th of 43 projects on the ESRP 2017-2019 Preliminary Investment Plan. They are requesting a \$20 million capital budget appropriation from the Washington State Legislature. The final list of projects that are funded will depend on the legislative appropriation.

NWSC GRANT REPORTS:

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Forage Fish Monitoring (Richards/Farrington):

1 – Surf smelt eggs were found at Cornet Bay! The eggs were found just east of the restoration area on September 16. According to Dan Penttila, this is the first documentation of spawning in this location.

2 - Farrington and Richards were invited to join Lucas Hart, NWSC Marine Program Manager, in helping Clallam and Jefferson MRCs initiate their first forage fish surveys. They spent a morning on the beach in Sequim, reviewing the protocol, demonstrating techniques and guiding the team in collecting and processing a sample.

3 - WDFW conducted a day of forage fish training on 11/15/16 at Padilla Bay. WDFW is doing a good job of ensuring that the protocol is executed as uniformly as possible across all surveys. It is our goal to continue to work toward high-quality citizen science data-gathering.

4 - Schwartz has agreed to help with forage fish surveys on Camano. Farrington and Richards will work with her to transition responsibilities. Thanks, Elsa!

5 - November marks the one-year anniversary of sample-collection during this most recent iteration of our forage fish effort. Island County was one of the earliest participants in this project as it got off the ground in 2001. Recognition of the importance of forage fish in the ecosystem is growing, and the MRC's role in furthering this understanding is significant.

Shoreline Restoration: Cornet Bay and others (Richards): Lisa Kaufman is coordinating with Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group to determine the best way to continue monitoring the plantings at Cornet Bay. It was suggested the MRC could reach out to the WSU Master Gardener Program for assistance.

Pigeon Guillemot Survey (Wood): Although the pigeon guillemots are mostly gone to their winter feeding grounds, the coordinating team is busy planning for a new administer position, which is proposed for funding through the MRC Opportunity Fund applications for both Island and Clallam Counties, and Whidbey Audubon Society, with support from Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society.

The team recently gave final approval for the research article which is scheduled to come out in the Winter issue of Northwestern Naturalist.

OTHER REPORTS:

NW Straits Commission / Foundation:

Commission: The Commission held a brief meeting on November 4. Commission meeting minutes can be found online: <http://www.nwstraits.org/archive/>

Ginny Broadhurst is planning to draft a comment letter regarding the Navy's plans for training in Puget Sound, which will include sonar and offshore explosives. More information on the Navy's plans can be found at: <http://nwtteis.com/TheNavysProposedAction.aspx> and <http://nwtteis.com/DocumentsandReferences/NWTTDocuments/FinalEISOEIS.aspx>.

Foundation: No update.

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Creosote Removal (Turpin): Turpin has been working with Matt Klope (retired Wildlife Biologist), and both will present at a future meeting.

Shoreline Armoring Reduction (Toledo): Toledo is working with Island County Planning and Coastal Geologic Services to develop a response plan for handling requests for emergency bulkhead permits after large storm events.

The NWSF, Skagit County MRC, and Deception Pass State Park are hosting a celebration of the completion of the Bowman Bay restoration project on Thursday, November 17, 2:30-4pm.

Lisa Kaufman and Lori Clark were selected to serve on the Puget Sound Partnership's Shoreline Armoring Implementation Strategy Interdisciplinary Team. This team of 10-12 experts will be creating the Implementation Strategy content by developing strategies to reduce net shoreline armoring.

WSU Extension: No further updates.

LEADERSHIP REPORTS

Chair: Schwartz reminded all that the Executive Committee (Wood, Schwartz, Adams, Rhodes) is also serving as the Nominating Committee for the upcoming election of officers in January.

ACTIONS/DECISIONS/FOLLOW-UP

- **Any MRC member** interested serving as Chair or Vice-Chair, or in nominating a fellow member, should notify the Nominating Committee.

Four members – Bennett, Rhodes, Walsh, and Wood – have terms expiring December 31, 2016. Bennett, Rhodes, and Wood have expressed a desire to be considered for reappointment. Walsh sent his regrets that he will not be able to serve a third term on the MRC due to additional duties he is taking on. The MRC expressed a desire for continued tribal representation. Toledo will bring this and the reappointment requests to the BICC on their December 7th work session.

Schwartz presented 3 options for the December 20th meeting, taking into consideration its proximity to the holidays:

1. Cancel the meeting
2. Cancel the meeting and organize a social gathering offsite
3. Hold an abbreviated meeting, and hold a social gathering offsite afterwards

Toledo will send out a poll to gauge availability and interest in these options.

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 5:29 pm.