

ISLAND COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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Minutes

Prepared by Anna Toledo

February 7, 2017

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

PRESENT: Elsa Schwartz, Chair, presiding, Ed Adams, Barbara Bennett, Ed Halloran, Linda Rhodes, Ruth Richards, Kestutis Tautvydas, David Thomson (WebEx), Anthony Turpin, Frances Wood, Florian Graner (non-voting technical advisor), Anna Toledo MRC Coordinator (staff) **ABSENT:** Lori Clark, Lois Farrington, Jill Johnson, Tim Lawrence, Todd Zackey

VISITORS: Lucas Hart (Northwest Straits Commission), Gregg Ridder (eelgrass project lead), Meredith Penny (Island County Planning & Community Development), Beverly Mesa-Zendt (Island County Planning & Community Development)

CALL TO ORDER: Schwartz called the meeting to order at 3:32 pm. **INTRODUCTIONS:** Introductions were done. **QUORUM:** A quorum was declared. **AGENDA:** Tautvydas moved to approve the agenda. Halloran seconded. The agenda was approved. **MINUTES:** Halloran moved to approve the minutes of the Island County MRC meetings held on January 3 and January 17, 2017. Tautvydas seconded. The minutes were approved.

CORRESPONDENCE: Toledo presented letters to the Tulalip Tribes and the Skagit River System Cooperative requesting a recommendation of a representative to be considered for appointment to the MRC.

ACTIONS/DECISIONS/FOLLOW-UP

- **ACTION:** Wood moved to approve the letters to the tribes. Adams seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
- **ACTION:** Halloran moved to draft a letter to the Port of Coupeville requesting a recommendation for appointment to the MRC. Wood seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

EDUCATIONAL PRESENTATION: BULL KELP MONITORING

Rhodes presented on the MRC's bull kelp monitoring project. Presentation available online: http://www.islandcountymrc.org/media/1798/2017-0207-kelp-presentation_smaller.pdf

Discussion points included:

- Use of other means for monitoring kelp, such as via motorboat. The concern with motorboats is entanglement and damage to the kelp.
- There is the potential to tap into recreational kayaking groups to expand the base of citizen scientists.

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- There is concern about the consistency of bed measurement among volunteers. For example, a 30% difference in area was recorded when two volunteers measured the same bed at the same time, paddling in opposite directions.
- Surveying from the water provides the opportunity for observing plant and animal life in kelp beds.
- Underwater videos of life in the bull kelp beds are linked on the MRC's project page: <http://www.islandcountymrc.org/projects/bull-kelp-monitoring/>
- The plants in the kelp beds along the Saratoga Passage had different coloring, were more sparse, and didn't break the surface as early as the plants on the Admiralty Inlet side.
- Would be useful to integrate bull kelp monitoring at sites where other MRC monitoring is occurring.
- Plans for 2017 include:
 - o Utilizing oblique photos to identify where there are kelp beds
 - o Combine visible and infrared photography
 - o Use aerial photography to select sites for further investigation by kayak
 - o Target specific shorelines and survey everything from point A to point B to capture all the bed information in a given area; compare with aerials.

LONG-RANGE PLANNING PRIORITIES IN ISLAND COUNTY

Meredith Penny, Long Range Planner with Island County Planning & Community Development presented on long-range planning priorities.

Every eight years the County is required to review and update their comprehensive plan. They started the update process in 2015, formed an advisory group and worked with a consultant group. A needs assessment and gaps analysis identified the following main areas for update:

- Water availability
- Geologically hazardous areas
- Wetland delineation
- Buffer averaging as it has to do with wetland buffers
- Temporary impacts to wetlands

The comprehensive plan was adopted in June 2016. Code updates are planned to be in place by June 2017.

Additional projects include:

- Organizing the critical areas code
- Working with IC DNR to update the surface water quality monitoring program. The current code references baseline monitoring, which has been conducted. Updates would include language on source identification.
- Balancing agriculture activities in critical areas protection.
- Ongoing cleanup and corrections to the SMP. Current Use Planners have identified areas that need clarification or correction.

The MRC could be helpful by:

- Reviewing and providing input on documents available for public comment. Penny will notify the MRC when documents are available for review.
- Reviewing the restoration chapter in the SMP in anticipation of the next update.

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BUSINESS ITEMS

2017-2018 workplan development (Toledo): The 2017-2018 workplan is due April 10th and will be the major agenda item at the March 7th meeting. Toledo presented the spreadsheet of ideas brought up during the January meetings.

Discussion points included:

- Monitoring “no net loss”:
 - o The SMP includes language on no net loss, but does not define how to measure it. Baseline information is needed to gauge no net loss.
 - o Mercer Island residents have started considering how to monitor no net loss. Bennett will follow-up for more information.
 - o No net loss is the bare minimum and does not achieve recovery.
 - o The ILIO has to track specific indicators, and could be tied into this process.
- Developing a monitoring plan: The MRC could be the data warehouse for all the monitoring occurring in Island County by the MRC and other organizations. The MRC serves an outreach role both to the County Commissioners as well as the general public.

ACTIONS/DECISIONS/FOLLOW-UP

- **Toledo** will send out the workplan development excel spreadsheet in advance of the March 7th meeting.
- **All MRC members** are encouraged to review the spreadsheet and be prepared to add and discuss any ideas for inclusion on the workplan at the March 7th meeting.

Net pen management recommendations (Toledo): Toledo informed the Board of Island County Commissioners (BICC) of the opportunity to comment by March 4 on two documents presented by Department of Ecology on their project scoping to update recommendations for commercial finfish aquaculture. More information on the project and documents is available online: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/aquaculture/recommendations.html>. The BICC expressed their desire for the MRC to prepare comments for them to consider providing to Department of Ecology.

The MRC discussed concerns, including:

- The local economic impacts net pen operations may have on other water-dependent uses, and how local governments are to prioritize those uses.
- Alternative practices, such as land-based fish farming are not considered in the documents.
- New regulations should not be in conflict with current salmon restoration efforts.
- Recent science, regional and international, needs to be considered, including the impact of disease and parasitology. New science should be able to be incorporated as it becomes available.
- The review process should include experts from fields beyond net pen aquaculture, including scientific experts on wild salmon populations.

ACTIONS/DECISIONS/FOLLOW-UP

- **ACTION: Adams moved to have a subcommittee draft a letter of recommendations to the Board of Island County Commissioners on Department of Ecology’s documents regarding finfish aquaculture. Wood seconded. Adams, Graner, Schwartz, and Bennett volunteered to be on the subcommittee. The motion passed unanimously.**

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Technical advisor (Schwartz): Tom Leschine, former Director of the School of Marine and Environmental Affairs, has expressed interested in being involved with the MRC. The Executive Committee has recommended he serve as a technical advisor, with expertise in marine policy.

ACTIONS/DECISIONS/FOLLOW-UP

- **ACTION: Adams moved to appoint Tom Leschine as a non-voting technical advisor to the MRC. Rhodes seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

Coordinator's update (Toledo)

MRC Opportunity Fund: The Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) has approved funding for Island County MRC's proposal to the MRC Opportunity Fund. The funding allocates \$7,000 towards outreach work, including the development of a video, monitoring display signs, identifying gear for volunteers conducting monitoring work, and a communications intern. Additionally, \$3,000 was approved towards a pigeon guillemot coordinator in partnership with Clallam MRC.

Maternity Leave: Toledo's last day of work before starting maternity leave is scheduled for Friday, February 17th, and is planned through May. Dawn Pucci and Caitlin Budd will be taking on MRC duties while Toledo is on leave.

NWSC GRANT REPORTS:

Forage Fish Monitoring (Richards/Farrington): No update.

Pigeon Guillemot Survey (Wood): The MRC has been awarded funds through the NWSF's Citizen Science Opportunity Fund to help finance a coordinator position. We will be working with the Clallam County MRC and possibly the Whidbey Audubon Society to create this position.

The team is preparing a poster to present at the International Seabird Conference in Tacoma in February.

The pigeon guillemot article has been published in Northwestern Naturalist. There was a bill of \$642 for publishing. A donation made several years ago to the NWSF, to be allocated to the Island County MRC in support of the pigeon guillemot project, is still available, along with a small amount of additional funding.

ACTIONS/DECISIONS/FOLLOW-UP

- **ACTION: Halloran moved to use the funds allocated to the Island County MRC being held by the NWSF to fund the \$642 Northwestern Naturalist publishing expense. Adams seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

OTHER REPORTS:

NW Straits Commission / Foundation:

Commission (Adams): Meeting highlights from 1/27/17 NWSC meeting were distributed electronically.

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The current year's funding is not affected by the freeze on EPA grants and contracts. Planning for next year's projects should continue as usual. Commission staff will inform MRCs of any funding updates as they happen.

Rich Childers was hired as the new Commission Director. He is in the process of transitioning from his position at WDFW.

Foundation (Lenny Corin): The EPA funding recently awarded to the Foundation for the Shoreline Armoring Reduction Project (SHARP) and restoration at Maylor's Point is not affected by the freeze on EPA grants and contracts. Funds were allocated in 2016 through the regional LIO process, and are coming through WDFW. Lisa is the lead on associated projects beginning in April, and will be working with MRCs to organize landowner workshops, technical site visits, educational outreach etc.

The 2016 audit of the Foundation's financials has been completed and paid for. All went smoothly and there are no changes from last year.

Government funding for derelict gear projects appears stable through 2018. Jason will be working with the MRCs and Commission to ensure consistency in a lot of crabber outreach. Most pressing is the need to secure long-term funding for reporting, response, and retrieval of lost nets and pots in Puget Sound. We have meetings upcoming with NOAA and WDFW to discuss.

The next Foundation Board meeting is February 15th. There will be a discussion on the Fundraisers that the Foundation is encouraging MRC's to conduct. Corin is available to help in any way. Donations made to the Foundation towards the MRC Opportunity Fund are matched dollar for dollar.

Creosote Removal (Turpin): Turpin is coordinating with DNR as well as the Navy to develop a process for prioritizing what needs to be removed from the beaches. Next steps would be to develop a team representing groups and organizations that spend a lot of time on the beach to work with their members to inventory and report creosote and marine debris.

The development of a phone app was suggested. Turpin will look into possibilities.

Shoreline Restoration and Armor Removal (Richards/Toledo): Toledo will present about the Shore Friendly program at Sound Waters University.

NWSF has been awarded funding to continue regional Shore Friendly work, and is planning their scope of work to include coordination with MRCs, and providing additional workshops, site visits, design, and permitting assistance.

Salmon Recovery Technical & Citizen Committee (Thomson): The seining setup at Dugualla will be tested February 15.

LEADERSHIP REPORTS

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Chair: Monthly Meetings: Reminder that MRC meetings will be transitioning to once per month while Toledo is on leave. The next meeting is March 7th.

Retreat: The Executive Committee is considering organizing an MRC retreat, likely in the fall, maybe October timeframe.

Joint Meeting: The Executive Committee is also considering holding a joint meeting with one or more neighboring MRCs, likely in the summer, perhaps in lieu of the July 4th meeting.

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 5:31 pm.