

ISLAND COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

WWW.ISLANDCOUNTYMRC.ORG



Minutes

Prepared by Anna Toledo

June 6, 2017

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

PRESENT: Elsa Schwartz, Chair presiding, Barbara Bennett, Lois Farrington, Ed Halloran, Linda Rhodes, Dave Thompson (WebEx), Kestutis Tautvydas, Frances Wood, Tom Leschine (non-voting technical advisor), Tony Turpin (non-voting technical advisor), Lori Clark County Lead – Island County Department of Natural Resources Manager (non-voting), Tim Lawrence WSU Extension Island County (non-voting), Caitlin Budd (temporary MRC staff), Anna Toledo MRC Coordinator (staff)

ABSENT: Ed Adams, William Bell, Jill Johnson, Ruth Richards

VISITORS: Lucas Hart (NWSC), Beau Gaughran (Communications Intern), Jennifer Riedmayer (IC DNR), Kit O'Neil (Citizen)

CALL TO ORDER: Schwartz called the meeting to order at 3:32pm. **INTRODUCTIONS:** Introductions were done. **QUORUM:** A quorum was declared. **AGENDA:** An update from Bennett and Beau Gaughran on Outreach and from Bennett on the Citizen Science Conference was added to the agenda after Other Reports. Tautvydas moved to approve the agenda as amended. Halloran seconded. The agenda as amended was approved. **MINUTES:** Corrections to the minutes of the Island County MRC meeting held on May 2, 2017: Tom Leschine was present on WebEx. Correct spelling of Anna Kagley's last name. Wood moved to approve the corrected minutes. Farrington seconded. The minutes as corrected were approved.

CORRESPONDENCE: None.

EDUCATIONAL PRESENTATIONS

Department of Health (DOH) Marine Sampling and Penn Cove:

Lori Clark provided an update in regards to the notification from DOH informing the MRC that shellfish harvest in Penn Cove has been classified as conditionally approved. There is no restriction on shellfish harvest, so no additional signage will be posted. The Island County Surface Water Quality (SWQ) team will be working on identifying sources of pollution. There is one case of onsite septic failure which the Board of Island County Commissioners has approved to move forward with legal proceedings, though this is not likely to be the source of pollution.

Jennifer Riedmayer informed that DOH collects 25 samples at Penn Cove once per month. Two high hits result in a threatened status. The SWQ team is conducting source identification work in the watershed, and found some exceedances in the Rolling Hills community. They are planning to conduct outreach efforts there to ensure septic systems are inspected and working properly. The SWQ team will also be accompanying DOH on an upcoming shoreline survey.

Surface Water Quality Monitoring Plan Update:

ISLAND COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

WWW.ISLANDCOUNTYMRC.ORG

Riedmayer provided a handout explaining updates to the SWQ monitoring plan. Five years of baseline data has been collected. Moving forward, monitoring will include 11 core sites monitored every month, effectiveness monitoring on water quality projects, reconnaissance monitoring, and source identification. A Water Quality Report is produced annually and will be available online. Lakes are currently not monitored through the SWQ program.

BUSINESS ITEMS

Thanks to MRC Temporary Staff

Schwartz presented Budd with a card and gift certificate from the MRC to thank her for her time assisting the MRC as temporary staff. Thanks were also given to Dawn Pucci.

Net Pen Meeting:

Bennett attended a meeting by phone about Department of Ecology's proposed changes to net pen management recommendations. Bennett's notes from the meeting were distributed by email in May. One of the primary points was that the study is only focused on Atlantic salmon raised in marine net pens. If land-based options were to be raised as an alternative, that would require a separate study. The other main take-away was that if net pens were to be reclassified as "optional" within the Shoreline Management Program, that would require a legal change. Neither of these alternatives would be easy to pursue.

Additional discussion points included:

- The MRC should compile a white paper on this subject to present to the Commissioners.
- The permitting process is structured as if it's agriculture, creating difficulties for businesses as well permitting agencies. A graduate student recently wrote a thesis on this topic.
- NOAA will be addressing the topic of permitting difficulties to reduce some of the barriers for aquaculture, whether nearshore or offshore, and will likely include more than just Atlantic salmon.
- A lot of the data on disease risk has been inconclusive, though the study sites may not be comparable to the Puget Sound ecosystem.
- The MRC should keep an open mind on how best to be influential in the net pen discussion.
- We can't expect other parts of the world to absorb the need for aquaculture production without taking responsibility for its impacts.
- Aquaculture efforts are driven by a trade deficit – we import more seafood than we export or produce for domestic consumption.
- With changes in ocean acidity, commercial aquaculture will likely start to move onshore and to more favorable marine sites.

ACTIONS/DECISIONS/FOLLOW-UP

- **Leschine** will distribute student thesis on net pen permitting.
- **Bennett** will organize a group to develop a white paper on net pen issues. Interested members included **Graner, Lawrence, and Leschine**.

Joint Meeting with Jefferson and Clallam County MRCs

ISLAND COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

WWW.ISLANDCOUNTYMRC.ORG

The joint meeting with Jefferson and Clallam County MRCs is scheduled for Tuesday, July 11 from 5pm-8pm in Port Townsend. This will be in lieu of the regular MRC meeting which would have fallen on July 4th.

The meeting will be a potluck, with time for socializing at the start, followed by time for topic-focused discussions. Toledo will be coordinating with the other MRCs on topics that apply to all three MRCs. Suggested topics included Olympia Oysters and eelgrass protection.

ACTIONS/DECISIONS/FOLLOW-UP

- **Toledo** will send out a poll asking about attendance at the joint meeting and topics of interest.

Meeting Frequency

Schwartz shared that the Executive Committee had discussed continuing to hold meetings once a month rather than twice a month.

Discussion included:

- General support of the idea
- Special meetings could be convened as needed
- The importance of keeping the educational aspect of meetings, including current topics and updates on MRC projects
- Additional meetings could be held during busy periods, such as when preparing the work plan

ACTIONS/DECISIONS/FOLLOW-UP

- **ACTION: Halloran moved to hold meetings once a month with the ability to schedule additional meetings as needed. Tautvydas seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

GPS Tracking

Lucas Hart shared that the Foundation and the Commission both own GPS units that are loaned out to MRCs. They have been working to inventory their stock. Currently the Foundation unit #2 and Commission unit #1 are unaccounted for, and were listed as loaned to the Island County MRC. Rhodes believed unit #2 was returned to Hart, and that unit #1 is in Toledo's office.

It was suggested that the Commission could house a google docs spreadsheet to track the units. Hart will follow-up with other NWS staff to determine the best solution.

ACTIONS/DECISIONS/FOLLOW-UP

- **Toledo** will pass along any directive from the Northwest Straits on how to track loaned GPS units.

NWSC GRANT REPORTS:

NWSC Grant Reports and Other Reports include information shared from written project updates submitted by project leads as well as any additional information shared during the meeting.

ISLAND COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

WWW.ISLANDCOUNTYMRC.ORG

Forage Fish Monitoring (Richards/Farrington): Farrington and Richards participated in a forage fish all-MRC phone call initiated by Lucas Hart, NWSC, and including Phill Dionne and staff from WDFW. Questions about survey purpose and duration, how to improve communication between WDFW and MRCs, how our data contributes to spawning beach protection, and how surveys help us better understand restoration effectiveness and no-net-loss were fielded. This call format will be continued, probably quarterly, for all forage fish survey leads. We believe it improves data quality among the seven MRCs, and improves communication with WDFW.

Pigeon Guillemot Survey (Wood): We recently hired Govinda Rosling as the Island/Clallam Counties guillemot survey coordinator, funded through the MRC Opportunity Fund with assistance from Whidbey Audubon and Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society. She has been working with the Clallam County survey coordinators as well as researching guillemot survey potential on Camano Island. On May 24 she, assisted by Ann Casey, conducted an informational meeting on Camano Island and presented the guillemot survey to about 25 people.

For the Whidbey Island survey, we recently hired an intern to continue in-depth research here. Caitlyn Connolly, a former Oak Harbor high school graduate who has just finished her junior year in college, will join us in that capacity. On May 24 we held our volunteer training session here on Whidbey. We are now conducting on-beach training for new volunteers and assigning volunteers to colonies.

The guillemot survey begins the week of June 12 and will continue 10 to 12 weeks or until the birds depart their breeding colonies.

Guillemot Appreciation Days are June 23 and 24. A happy hour hosted by the Guillemot Research Group and Whidbey Audubon Society will be held June 23 from 3-5pm at Ott & Murphy Winery. A field trip to a guillemot colony will be held June 24, meeting at Trinity Lutheran Church parking lot at 8am.

OTHER REPORTS:

NW Straits Commission/Foundation: Hart provided several updates:

- The NWSF is producing a 4-minute documentary about the NW Straits Initiative.
- A series of workshops on Marine Energy will be held in August. More information to follow.
- The NWSC is reviewing grant proposals
- Hart is working with Puget Sound Partnership to raise Olympia Oysters to a Tier 1 priority from Tier 2

Farrington noted she attended the Olympia Oyster Restoration meeting, and has been doing some information-gathering. Dugualla Bay historically had presence, but is very mucky. Penn Cove is another potential site. It is not a high priority area, so it would probably not be recommended for seeding but maybe for providing habitat.

Creosote Removal (Turpin): Turpin has been coordinating with Chris Robertson at DNR, who is waiting for approval for funding for the MyCoast App through which anyone on the beach can identify locations of toxic materials on the shoreline. Robertson is crafting an addendum to the

ISLAND COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

WWW.ISLANDCOUNTYMRC.ORG

MyCoast app to make it usable by multiple counties. The MRC should look for partnering organizations, such as SWS, COASST, and other groups that have people out on the beach. The MRC could develop materials, such as a small business card, on how to report creosote and marine debris. It would be helpful to coordinate with Snohomish MRC and hear their experience with the MyCoast App.

ACTIONS/DECISIONS/FOLLOW-UP

- **Turpin** would like time at a future meeting to discuss how to partner with other organizations on reporting creosote and marine debris.

Shoreline Restoration and Armor Removal:

From Lisa Kaufman:

Cornet Bay: We had a small, but efficient weeding session at the Phase 2 area on May 17th. One new volunteer from the Skagit Salish Sea Stewards class along with a grad student from UW assisted. The grad student will be helping with the vegetation monitoring this summer, including writing the report. Dates for weeding are attached; additional annual monitoring dates will be announced soon.

Vegetation Monitoring Workshop will be held on June 3rd at Bowman Bay. Those interested in assisting with weeding, watering, and monitoring at Cornet Bay should consider attending. This workshop will provide an introduction to identifying the native versus invasive plants, assessing plant health, and estimating coverage in riparian plantings so we can measure the survival rates. Those interested in attending should contact Lisa Kaufman at NWSF or call Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group at 360-336-0172.

Tom Slocum from the Conservation District will complete the final elevation surveys required by the Department of Ecology for the Phase One area this summer.

Seahorse Siesta Barge and Bulkhead Removal: NWSF received word from US Fish & Wildlife Service that we will be awarded \$50,000 from the Puget Sound Coastal Program to assist with the removal of the barge and bulkhead. This, in addition to the pending SRFB funding gets us closer to full funding (a bit more is still needed).

Sunlight Shores Bulkhead Removal: Presented the project to SRFB citizens' committee and technical advisory committee. The project seemed to be well received. We are hoping to add this site for possible beach seining. More details to come.

Maylor Point Armor Removal: Still waiting on permits to be finalized. Funding is in place, but construction will be planned for summer 2018.

Shoreline Armor Reduction Program: NWSF is looking for a couple MRC members to assist with the next phase of the program. We will be working on direct communication with landowners identified in the last phase as having higher levels of feasibility for armor removal. Funds are also available for more site visits and a workshop or targeted meetings for key communities. New outreach materials are being developed.

ISLAND COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

WWW.ISLANDCOUNTYMRC.ORG

Salmon Recovery Technical & Citizen Committee: No updates.

Citizen Science Conference (Bennett): Bennett attended an international conference on citizen science. It is an emerging topic with the potential for application across fields. Bennett heard positive feedback on the model of the NWS, and was encouraged to show on educational materials how the MRC projects are connected.

Outreach (Bennett and Gaughran): Communications Intern, Beau Gaughran, shared the two areas of work he has been focusing on:

Fact sheets

- Double-sided, summarizes project, provides highlights and how to get involved
- Could be used when tabling events, handouts for Commissioners

Feedback

- Need to determine target audience – commissioners vs public
- Should avoid redundancy. The fact sheets contain a lot of the same information as what is on the website.
- Fact sheets could be used for sandwich boards.
- Contact info should be MRC Coordinator rather than project lead.

Volunteer identification gear

- Several potential products were identified: canopy, sandwich boards, arm bands, vests, and hats

Feedback

- Canopy probably not needed.
- Sandwich boards would be helpful.
- Hats and vests would be useful. Arm bands might not be worn.

LEADERSHIP REPORTS

Chair: No report

County Lead: No report.

County Commissioners: No report.

Reminders: The SWS Board is holding a meeting June 27th, and has invited MRC members to attend to discuss how to work together more efficiently and effectively. Potential discussion could include grant collaboration, volunteer hours as match, the monitoring inventory the MRC is proposing to develop. Toledo reminded all that the MRC does not give out funding. MRC funds come through the Northwest Straits Commission for projects the MRC has identified in their annual grant proposal.

COMMUNITY COMMENT FORUM AND Q&A FROM THE PUBLIC:

None.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business and no further comments, the meeting adjourned at 5:29 pm.