

ISLAND COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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Minutes

Prepared by Anna Toledo

August 1, 2017

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

PRESENT: Barbara Bennett, Vice-Chair presiding, Ed Adams, Ed Halloran, Linda Rhodes (WebEx), Ruth Richards, Kestutis Tautvydas, Dave Thompson (WebEx), Tim Lawrence WSU Extension Island County (non-voting), Anna Toledo MRC Coordinator (staff)

ABSENT: William Bell, Lori Clark, Lois Farrington, Jill Johnson, Elsa Schwartz, Frances Wood

VISITORS: Janet St. Clair (Sound Water Stewards), John Arnell, Dawn Spilsbury Pucci (IC Lead Entity, Matthew Colston (IC Public Health), Beau Gaughran (Communications Intern), Erica Bleke (WA DNR)

CALL TO ORDER: Bennett called the meeting to order at 3:35pm. **INTRODUCTIONS:** Introductions were done. **QUORUM:** A quorum was declared. **AGENDA:** Halloran moved to approve the agenda. Tautvydas seconded. The agenda was approved. **MINUTES:** Tautvydas moved to approve the notes from the joint Island, Clallam, and Jefferson MRC meeting held on July 11, 2017. Halloran seconded. The meeting notes were approved. **CORRESPONDENCE:** None.

Citizen Science at Smith & Minor Island Aquatic Reserve: Erica Bleke from DNR Aquatic Reserves Program presented on the Aquatic Reserves and citizen science at Smith & Minor Island Aquatic Reserve (SMIAR). Presentation available online:

<http://www.islandcountymrc.org/media/17613/2017-0801-smiar-citizen-science.pdf>

Currently the citizen science at SMIAR is focused on kelp, and whether kelp harvest is impacting recruitment. Bleke requested input from the MRC on any additional citizen science that would be recommended at SMIAR. Discussion included:

- Rhodes is helping to develop language for the kiosk at SMIAR.
- Most of the nearby agricultural drainage does not fall within the boundaries of SMIAR.
- Janet St. Clair offered to ask Sound Water Stewards for suggestions
- Zooplankton/phytoplankton tows might be interesting, though likely out of the range of citizen science
- The MRC will follow-up with Bleke if there are any further ideas. Projects could include outreach and education in addition to citizen science.

Outreach Update (Bennett, Gaughran): Gaughran presented information on volunteer identification products and a draft poster to be placed on sandwich boards during monitoring work.

Feedback included:

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- Brightly-colored vests might receive more utilization than arm bands. Halloran has information on vests he has purchased in the past. A badge could be clipped onto the vest. A vest with pockets would be preferable.
- The hats were well-received and would be useful.
- On sandwich board poster, change wording of “Fun Facts” to “At a Glance” or “Did You Know?”. The poster could also include a call to action for the reader, giving suggestions on ways the reader can get engaged or take action.
- 2-3 sandwich boards would be ideal

ACTIONS/DECISIONS/FOLLOW-UP

- **ACTION: Adams moved to move forward with the purchase of 3 sandwich boards. Richards seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

Citizen Science Conference: Bennett gave an overview of the citizen science conference she attended. Presentation available online: <http://www.islandcountymrc.org/media/17615/2017-0801-citizen-science-conference.pdf>

Discussion included:

- Citizen science is a growing field and new technologies are allowing for greater potential.
- It is important to consider ethics and boundaries of citizen science projects.
- The MRCs and NWSI were seen as a unique model to addressing local environmental concerns.
- In outreach materials, it is important to explain how the MRC’s projects relate to each other and tell a larger story.
- Federal agencies have been encouraged to use citizen science.

Budget Update (Discussion): Toledo informed the MRC that they are anticipating between \$5,000-\$10,000 of unspent funds in the annual grant from the NWSC. The funds expire September 30, 2017 and cannot be rolled over. Any unspent funds would be returned to the NWSC for use through their grant with the Puget Sound Partnership.

Discussion included:

- There is general interest within the MRC to pursue expansion of the MyCoast app.
- It would be helpful to get more information on the app. Either have Snohomish County MRC present and/or discuss more at the conference.
- Sasha Horst (NWSC) is looking into options to have the app funded regionally, potentially through DNR, and recommended engaging in those conversations before spending money to expand the app just to Island County.
- With the current grant, any remaining funds would be best focused on the Outreach task. Other projects do not have immediate needs.
- Money returned to the NWSC would be well-spent. The MRC can emphasize their interest in having the NWSC explore the expansion of the MyCoast app.

ACTIONS/DECISIONS/FOLLOW-UP

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- **ACTION:** Adams moved to focus any remaining funds in the 2016-2017 MRC grant on the Outreach task with any unspent funds returning to the NWSC, and have Toledo emphasize to the NWSC the MRC's interest in the MyCoast app. Halloran seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

BUSINESS ITEMS

Letter of Support (Toledo): Toledo presented two letters of support – one for a restoration project involving removal of an old barge at Seahorse Siesta; the other for a restoration project involving the removal of rip rap and other hard armor at Sunlight Shores.

ACTIONS/DECISIONS/FOLLOW-UP

- **ACTION:** Halloran moved to have Vice-Chair Bennett sign the two letters of support. Tautvydas seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Outreach by San Juan County to Reduce Pressures on Orcas (Toledo): The San Juan LIO has made it a goal to reduce pressures on Southern Resident Killer Whales. One of their strategies is to involve local ports, marinas, and other boating facilities to distribute educational brochures targeting recreational boaters.

The MRC agreed to assist in distributing the brochures. Halloran can distribute them at the grand opening of the ramp at Possession Park on August 17th. It was also suggested that the brochures could be included in a packet when boaters rent a slip.

ACTIONS/DECISIONS/FOLLOW-UP

- **Toledo** will request a box of brochures that will be available at the next meeting and in her office.

Coordinator's Update (Toledo)

- MRC Conference: The MRC conference will be held on November 3-4, 2017 in Bellingham. All MRC members are encouraged to attend. Additional information will be distributed as it becomes available.
- 2016 NWSI Annual Report: The report is available online: http://www.nwstraits.org/media/2402/nwsi_2016-annual_report.pdf. Hard copies are also available.
- Membership Vacancy: Applications for MRC membership are being accepted until August 8 at 4:30pm. More information and application available on the MRC website.
- MRC Planning Retreat: The Executive Committee is working on an MRC retreat, to be scheduled in the fall. More details to follow.

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.

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Eelgrass Monitoring (Tautvydas): Eelgrass beds are being monitored, but with some delays because of equipment malfunction (mainly boat motors). Ken has been able to complete repairs. For next year, if underwater videography is to be continued, the team will need another volunteer with a boat, since Ken Urstad will be retiring from the project.

A conference call to discuss multi-beam sonar surveys in Island, Clallam, and Jefferson MRCs was held on July 27th. The call resulted from discussions at the joint Island, Jefferson, Clallam MRC meeting in July. The advantages of multi-beam sonar include that it is faster and covers 100% of the bed. However, additional verification needs to be conducted to confirm what species is being measured. Jim Norris suggested MRCs could focus on eelgrass restoration. MRCs would need additional information about eelgrass restoration before pursuing it as a project.

Seining (Tautvydas): A draft report has been developed analyzing the eight years of pre and post restoration data at Cornet Bay. Dawn Pucci is reviewing and finalizing the draft.

Kelp Monitoring (Rhodes): Kelp survey season is in full swing this summer, with our faithful volunteers working at all previously surveyed sites: Ben Ure Island (Cornet Bay), Hoypus Point, Polnell Point (Crescent Harbor), Lowell Point (Camano Island State Park), & Ebeys Landing. An on-line effort, described [here](#), to capture casual spottings of kelp beds throughout the county was advertised in the June Sound Water Stewards newsletter & the Summer Shore Stewards newsletter. Gregg Ridder has kindly offered to fly & photograph the county's shorelines in late summer for kelp beds.

OTHER REPORTS:

Smith & Minor Island Aquatic Reserve (Rhodes): Due to the persistent appearance of kelp & seaweed harvesters on SMIAR beaches, the harvest study & the intertidal study will be extended into the low tides of July. The welcome signs by WA Department of Natural Resources are nearly finished, & will be installed at beach accesses, hopefully before summer is over. Content on the information kiosk at Libbey Beach (Island County MRC co-sponsored the kiosk) will be rotated as the seasons turn. For example, the enlarged bi-lingual sustainable harvest brochure will be posted only during harvest season.

Island Local Integrating Organization (Bennett): Bennett will not be able to attend the ILIO meeting on August 11th. Toledo will attend instead.

WSU Extension: No updates.

LEADERSHIP REPORTS

Chair: No report

County Lead: No report.

County Commissioners: No report.

COMMUNITY COMMENT FORUM AND Q&A FROM THE PUBLIC: None.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business and no further comments, the meeting adjourned at 5:20 pm.