

ISLAND COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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Retreat Summary

Prepared by Anna Toledo

November 17, 2017

CAMANO ISLAND YACHT CLUB, CAMANO

PRESENT: Elsa Schwartz, Chair, presiding, Barbara Bennett, Linda Rhodes, Ruth Richards, Lori Clark Island County DNR (non-voting), Anna Toledo MRC Coordinator (staff)
ABSENT: Ed Adams, Ed Halloran, Jill Johnson, Kestutis Tautvydas, Frances Wood, Tim Lawrence

VISITORS: Dawn Spilsbury Pucci (Island County Lead Entity Salmon Recovery), Lisa Kaufman (NWSF), Lucas Hart (NWSC)

CALL TO ORDER: Schwartz called the meeting to order at 10:05am. **INTRODUCTIONS:** Introductions were done. **QUORUM:** A quorum was not declared. The November 17 agenda and October 3 minutes were not approved as there was not a quorum.

WELCOME AND RETREAT OVERVIEW: Schwartz welcomed retreat participants and reviewed the retreat goals.

BUSINESS:

MRC Application: Members reviewed an MRC application from Matt Kukuk. Members agreed that he would be a good addition to the committee, bringing a perspective on planning and landowner concerns. The Board of County Commissioners will consider his appointment at a December work session.

Membership: Participants discussed ideas for recruiting members to fill the existing membership vacancies. Ideas included:

- Approach press to write about MRC
- **Bennett** will draft a template press release
- **Toledo** will draft a one-pager about the MRC and membership expectations
- Reach out to technical advisors about interest in full membership (**Schwartz** will reach out to Tony Turpin, **Toledo** will reach out to William Bell)
- Potential groups to contact:
 - o Conservation District (could **Adams** reach out?)
 - o Whidbey Watershed Stewards (**Bennett** will contact)
 - o Fishing groups (**Spilsbury Pucci** will contact)
 - o Sound Water Stewards coordinator (**Toledo** will contact)
 - o Schools for student representative
- Hold meetings quarterly on Camano to increase participation from Camano

ICE BREAKER: Toledo led participants in an ice breaker.

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CONFERENCE DEBRIEF: Participants were invited to share ideas and inspiration gathered from the MRC Conference. Discussion included:

- Communicating with County officials: have a clear message; invite them to tours, events, workshops
- Think big
- Be future-oriented
- Focus on preservation: highlight our existing natural resources
- Develop support for Whidbey basin

PROJECT EVALUATION: Participants reviewed and agreed on the scoring criteria provided without any changes. Each project was discussed and scored according to the criteria. Project scores are included in the following table, and notes from the discussion are below.

Project	Alignment	Project Development	Impact	Total	NWSI Goal 1	NWSI Goal 2	NWSI Goal 3	NWSI Goal 4	Limiting factor (what's keeping the project from further development/implementation?)
					Habitat protection and restoration	Water quality	Marine species and habitats	Education	
Outreach	4	4	4	12				X	Capacity may be an issue
Forage Fish	4	4	3	11	X		X	X	Capacity
Bull kelp	4	4	3	11			X	X	Capacity
Pigeon guillemot	4	4	2	10			X	X	May need to evolve intern's role
Eelgrass	4	2	3	9			X		Project champion, methods may need to evolve
Seining	4	2	N/A	6			X		Project champion, no target sites, need to determine goal (maybe new goal)
Marine debris/ creosote	4	2	N/A	6				X	Dependent on WA DNR, MRC's role needs to be developed more

Outreach

- Upcoming work includes a forum and a white paper on net pens. The forum topic is TBD. The topic that rose to the top from the needs assessment was on aging infrastructure. Bennett, Kaufman, and Toledo will meet to discuss how this might be tied to the SHARP outreach.

Forage fish

- Seeing results can take time, but it provides a good news story when eggs are found, which is good for protection as well as political will.
- Important component of larger regional project.
- Monitoring provides information on species use and habitats. Can inform restoration, protection, and regulation.
- Supported by WDFW.

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- Bring Lucas and Jason into the conversation for training needs.
- Maybe Snohomish County MRC could monitor on Camano.

Bull kelp

- Rhodes has redefined goals: inform Commissioners about bull kelp and where it is located in Island County.
- Project is filling in data gap on bull kelp (*Nereocystis*).
- WA DNR and NOAA are interested in results.
- For future work, will maintain boat-based component to compare beds on outer Whidbey Island and Saratoga passage. There is volunteer interest in conducting kayak surveys.
- Visible and infrared images show how much shoreline in Island County has adjacent kelp beds. Could continue to fly with volunteer groups, such as LightHawk. Would need to get camera equipment.

Pigeon guillemot

- Monitoring program is spreading throughout the Sound. Lots of interested, engaged volunteers.
- No management decisions are coming from the results.
- Project may have more outreach value than scientific value. The MRC's role could transition more towards outreach, with the intern focusing on an outreach component.
- Outreach intern could work with pigeon guillemot project and other outreach needs.
- How would project look without summer intern? Could scale back work – intern returns to a site in X number of years.

Eelgrass

- Has helped address the question of whether eelgrass is increasing/decreasing.
- Could use information to quantify no net loss.
- Technology has changed; could use different tools (e.g. sonar).
- If it will continue, effort could be reduced. Could utilize LightHawk for aerial work.

Seining

- Originally used to establish salmonid use.
- Hard to pin salmonid use directly to restoration success.
- Sunlight Shores location as possible seining site. Tautvydas will look into possibility.
- If project is to continue, goal would need to be redefined: e.g. looking at species diversity, not just salmon use. If looking at species diversity, seining could happen outside of salmon window. Could look at how usage changes over the seasons.
- Impact not scored as that will depend on redefined goals.

Marine debris/creosote

- Development largely depends on WA DNR. They are awaiting funding to develop MyCoast app to assist in reporting creosote and marine debris.
- MRC's role could be to engage the public in using the app.
- If moving forward with outreach, it will be important to manage expectations about what will be done with creosote that is reported. DNR focuses on larger removal work than individual logs that wash up on the beach.
- Impact not scored as project needs further development to determine impact.

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Based on the scoring and discussion, the projects were divided into three categories:

Move forward to 2018-2019 work plan

Outreach

Forage fish

Bull kelp

MRC's role needs to be modified

Pigeon guillemot

Eelgrass

More development is needed

Seining

Marine debris

EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES: Participants discussed emerging opportunities. Discussion included:

- NWSF planning to submit NTA for monitoring at armor removal sites (looking at armored vs unarmored). In Island County, this would include: Maylor Point, Seahorse Siesta, Sunlight Shores. Monitoring would be once per year. No funding required from MRC, but would require capacity. MRC can engage local community in volunteering.
- MyCoast app. Sasha Horst with NWSF is talking with WA DNR about how to move forward with the MyCoast app on a regional scale.
- Julia Parrish with the Coastal Observation and Seabird Survey Team (COASST) has expanded their project to include identifying marine debris.

FUTURE PROJECT IDENTIFICATION: Participants discussed future project ideas.

Discussion included:

1. Marine Debris: MyCoast app, COASST, NOAA Marine Debris reporting system, state marine debris protocol being developed
2. Monitoring of NWSF SHARP sites
3. Marine water quality – storm water outreach
 - a. Partnering on LID/rain gardens
 - b. Focusing on high nutrient areas
 - c. Work with schools, watersheds
 - d. Partner with Conservation District
4. Storm surge monitoring
5. Sea level rise outreach
 - a. Forum: Bringing coastal resilience into armor removal. Tie into forum on aging infrastructure: opportunity to improve coastal function.
 - b. Research social and economic cost of SLR and storm surge. This could be contracted. Could help Commissioners know what to address/prioritize, understand potential socioeconomic consequences.
6. Microplastics (could connect with OA and marine debris)
7. Volunteer capacity (not specifically a project, but ties into all projects). Coordinate with SWS to let them know what we're planning. Hold meeting/potluck with SWS.
8. Connect with schools.

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FUTURE PROJECT EVALUATION: The potential projects identified can be categorized into monitoring or outreach, and could be approached as such when developing the work plan and grant proposals:

Monitoring:

- SHARP monitoring
- Storm surge monitoring
- MyCoast – marine debris

Outreach:

- MyCoast – marine debris
- Storm water outreach
- Sea level rise outreach
- Microplastics
- Schools

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

WRAP UP:

- For new projects, including outreach, meaningful metrics of success should be developed.
- When developing new projects, place measurable parameters on the goals and lifespan of the project.
- Celebrate the work that's been accomplished in projects that are sunsetting or moving away from MRC.
- Project ideas will be discussed further at the December MRC meeting.

ADJOURN: The meeting adjourned at 2:57pm.