

ISLAND COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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Minutes

Prepared by Ann Prusha

January 5, 2021

ZOOM

PRESENT: Kelly Zupich, Chair, presiding, Hannah Liss, Vice Chair, Barbara Bennett, Randy Berthold, Scott Chase, Ed Halloran, Gwendolyn Hannam, Andi Kopit, Elsa Schwartz, Kes Tautvydas, Tim Lawrence, WSU Extension (non-voting), Lori Clark, IC DNR Manager/ILIO Coordinator (non-voting), Janet St. Clair, IC Commissioner, Anna Toledo, MRC Coordinator (staff), Ann Prusha (staff)

VISITORS: Ken Collins, Lucas Hart, NWSC, Jill Lipoti, Dana Oster, NWSC, Alexandra Plumb, IC Public Works, Hiller West

CALL TO ORDER: Kelly called the meeting to order at 3:02pm. **INTRODUCTIONS:** Introductions were made. **QUORUM:** A quorum was declared. **AGENDA:** Hannah moved to approve the agenda. Ed seconded. The agenda was approved. **MINUTES:** Hannah moved to approve the December 1, 2020 minutes. Gwendolyn seconded. The minutes were approved. **CORRESPONDENCE:** None.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (Kelly):

Every January, we have an election of officers for Chair and Vice Chair. Kelly and Hannah have offered to serve for another term. There were no additional nominations.

Gwendolyn moved to reappoint Kelly Zupich as Chair, and Hannah Liss as Vice Chair. Randy seconded. The motion was approved.

The Chair puts forward recommendations for the Executive Committee (EC). The EC helps with behind-the-scenes planning and administration. Kelly thanked Elsa, who has served on the EC for 5 years.

Kelly recommended Randy and Hannah to continue, and the addition of Scott. Kelly will also continue to serve on the EC.

Elsa moved to approve Randy Berthold, Hannah Liss, Scott Chase, and Kelly Zupich to serve on the Executive Committee. Barbara seconded. The motion was approved.

Mike Bianchi, who recently stepped off the MRC, would like to continue serving as a Technical Advisor. A Technical Advisor is someone that the MRC acknowledges as an individual who can be called on, is important to projects, and to whom we would like to maintain a connection. They do not need to be approved by the Board of Island County Commissioners (BICC), and do not vote.

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Gwendolyn moved to approve Mike Bianchi as a Technical Advisor. Kelly seconded. The motion was approved.

PROJECT PLANNING (Anna):

Anna showed the work plan for the calendar year, the template of which came from Snohomish MRC. This is not all-encompassing, but does break down our projects. We will also be discussing project plans for the next grant year, which spans from October 2021 through September 2022. Please send Anna any edits to the timeline by the end of the week. This is not set in stone and is meant to be a living document.

There was discussion about MRC members attending BICC meetings, and that a volunteer's voice would be valuable. It would be good to be present, even if volunteers do not present information. Anna will let members know when MRC is scheduled for a BICC work session.

2021 Calendar Year

Anna went over the timeline and check points for 2021, broken down by month.

Budget planning

While discussing individual projects, we can include budget discussions. The EC often does a budget review in the summer.

Forage Fish

There was discussion about budgeting to pay Dan Penttila to analyze samples instead of Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). We could potentially use funds for a specific research question or finite, defined project, but probably not for general sampling unless there are extra funds left over. Funds should first be prioritized elsewhere. Analysis by WDFW takes longer, but is free. Most of our 2020 samples have not been analyzed. Getting data back to volunteers is important, but there are other ways to engage them, such as reviewing results with a microscope. Kelly volunteered to help engage volunteers. Gwendolyn had interest in analyzing samples. WDFW would still need to do the QA/QC. She could give us preliminary results, but not official ones. It would be a significant time commitment but it would be good for volunteers to see results sooner.

Port Susan Marine Stewardship Area (MSA) Update

Discussions about having a partnership with Snohomish MRC to update the MSA's report card will begin soon.

Outreach

Barbara commented that she would like to encourage members to think about projects they are working on and any aids that will help us to communicate with the public, especially during the summer. This should be ongoing. She would like to use the winter months as an opportunity to polish materials so they are ready for the summer.

Project tours: Commissioner St. Clair commented that she would like to educate newly elected officials in our community. This could be a tour of major projects. The vision is to help persuade them of the importance of this work, early if possible. There are a lot of ways to do a tour. Anna will talk to Lori. Tentatively, the goal could be for late spring/early summer (depending on

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COVID). Barbara commented that needs assessment subcommittee members will be interviewing elected officials in February, and asking their impression of the importance of marine resources.

Needs Assessment: The outreach team is in the middle of the needs assessment, and it is scheduled to be ready for reporting in April.

Planning: There will be planning for different activities and how to conduct them, especially during the pandemic. It will be informed by the needs assessment and communications plan.

Eelgrass Storymap: Anna will connect Ann to Florian Graner, and Kelly will send photos from the SWS archives. Ann requested that everyone send photos, interesting stories, etc. about eelgrass if they can.

Crabber Outreach: We adapted in 2020. We can plan for this in the spring and implement in the summer. We do not know what outreach will look like this summer. Scott has done a lot of work for this on Camano Island. There was discussion about having a physical presence and having materials out for community members. Scott shared that Sound Water Stewards (SWS) may have an interest in collaborating on a Crabbing 101 video. There was discussion about opportunities for virtual education and outreach, and putting out materials in conjunction with in-person outreach. There was discussion about doing research for crabber demographics to ensure the materials are accessible to all audiences, including looking at the need for having the materials available in other languages. It would be a good idea to look at this in the needs assessment. WDFW might have this information. There have been multiple language publications for seaweed harvest materials, and maybe this could be expanded.

Restoration

Anna, Gwendolyn, or Lisa Kaufman could give restoration updates on projects of interest – including Oak Harbor Marina, Hoypus Point, Polnell Point, Seahorse Siesta, and Hidden Beach. We could get updates to know how these projects are doing, provide input or feedback, assist with monitoring and outreach, or help in other ways. We could break out the timeline for different projects, even ones we are not the leads on. We could add the timeline for Hoypus Point when it is established.

Cornet Bay: We will coordinate with Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group. Watering is important in the summer. It is difficult to say when we can stop maintaining the site; it has had an ongoing need for some maintenance. Last year, new plants were installed. For a site as highly utilized as Cornet Bay, we want it to look good and keep the weeds controlled. If we can get some volunteers who are interested to pull weeds and water, that would be helpful. This site will take longer to completely establish because the soil is not great.

Upcoming grant year (October 2021-September 2022)

We apply for funding on a two-year cycle (October 2021-September 2023), but generally plan in one-year phases.

Budget

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We usually have about \$10-12k available for project funds after staff time, overhead, and travel. The final budget will depend on how much the Northwest Straits Commission receives from federal and state funds.

Seining

The Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) is able to cover budget needs for permitting and data entry, so we would not need to include a budget for it. There are a lot of volunteers eager to participate. Seining would begin in 2022.

Port Susan MSA Update

The goal of this project would be to update the Port Susan MSA report card, convert it to an online format, and conduct outreach. This project would be broken into 2 phases: 1) the first year would focus on reviewing the report card, gathering new information, and compiling edits. There would be initial gathering of information, review of each topic, consideration of new science, upcoming projects, and gaps. It will involve holding stakeholder meetings. We would work with a consultant and/or graduate student to help with those tasks. We will also determine, with Snohomish MRC, how to juggle this partnership. 2) The second year (October 2022 – September 2023) would be converting the information to an online format and conducting outreach. This would also be informed by stakeholder input.

There was discussion about finding a way to encourage underserved community members to use/enjoy/gain ecological benefits from MSA. We will bring this back to the Port Susan MSA subcommittee meeting. There was a comment that, since there are only a handful of public access points to Port Susan, outreach was originally made to those who lived there. A big part of this effort included outreach to Tulalip Tribes.

Equity and Social Justice

Hannah suggested forming a subcommittee for equity and inclusion – subcommittee members can take trainings and present the information to the group. There was discussion that this is a bigger issue and could include additional groups. We need to figure out where there are communities we are not reaching, and which demographics we can serve better. It is important that we invite people to the table, and meet them where they are. There was discussion about doing a Tribal Acknowledgement, and to acknowledge the tribes in our signage and materials. It is important to partner with organizations who are already doing this. Even in the Puget Sound region, there are many kids who have never visited saltwater, and programs can help educate them about the nearshore. We need to recognize that tribes are already doing amazing work. This is a statewide issue but we need to join with other places and potentially all of the MRCs to gain capacity to work on this. Andi, Hannah, Barbara, Alexandra, Jill, and Kelly all expressed interest in being on this subcommittee. This subcommittee may be hosted through another entity, such as IC.

COORDINATOR'S UPDATE (Anna):

The grant for the Voluntary No-Anchor Zone project was not awarded. NWS is still committed to seeking funding to move the project forward. Thank you to Dana and everyone for all of your work on this!

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Randy worked with some neighbors to let them know about the MyCoast app. They reported some creosote and debris, which WA DNR removed. Thanks, Randy!

Kelly and Anna are putting together a MyCoast training for SWS and MRC volunteers to get an overview of using the app.

Sound Waters University will be on February 6th. It is all virtual, and will have a more focused training with fewer classes. There is funding to cover some interested MRC members, and there is also an early bird special. Andi, potentially Hannah, Elsa, Jill, Alex, and Ed are interested. MRC will have a virtual booth. There was a suggestion to add the NWS one-sheet to the booth, as well as a small blurb about adapting through 2020 despite COVID. There will be a Jan Holmes Volunteer of the Year booth.

Ken, Jill, and Alex have all been recommended to the BICC for approval to become MRC members. This item was moved to the BICC meeting on January 20th, so hopefully they will be official members by the February meeting.

NWSC GRANT REPORTS

Forage Fish Monitoring (Ann/Anna)

1. Volunteer monitoring activity has been halted due to COVID-19. Jason Morgan from NWSF will be monitoring Hoypus Point and Cornet Bay, and Ann Prusha will be monitoring Hidden Beach and Seahorse Siesta. However, monitoring at Seahorse Siesta is on hold until further notice due to ongoing construction.
2. Although Matt Kukuk has stepped down as an MRC member, he is going to continue supporting the forage fish program.
3. Once volunteer monitoring can restart we have two new teams – one is ready to resume monitoring at Maple Grove, and the other will begin monitoring at Sunlight Shores.
4. WDFW has sent us results! They are available if anyone wants to see them.
5. There will be a mini symposium about sand lance in the Salish Sea on Thursday, January 14.

Update: None

Outreach (Barbara)

Update at meeting.

Update: Interviews for the needs assessment are taking place.

OTHER REPORTS

NW Straits Commission/Foundation (Elsa)

Update at meeting.

Update: NWSC is looking to add a Tribal Acknowledgement, and is working with the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission.

Island Location Integrating Organization (Barbara)

Update at meeting.

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Update: The Human Wellbeing survey we all helped respond to has been receiving a lot of attention from Puget Sound Partnership.

Salmon Recovery Technical & Citizen Committee (Anna):

Update at meeting.

Update: SRTCC put out their Request for Proposals for the grant round. The Letter of Intent is due by January 15th, and proposals are due February 15th. There is space for an interested MRC member to join SRTCC. Hannah offered to be the ILIO representative if no one else wants to do it. Alexandra and Gwendolyn might also be interested.

LEADERSHIP REPORTS

Chair: None

County Lead: None

County Commissioners (Commissioner St. Clair): Helen Price Johnson leaving is a loss, even as we celebrate Commissioner Bacon coming aboard. We will be making final decisions on some committee assignments. Commissioner St. Clair is picking up some of that work, and looks forward to continuing this work. Her intention is to continue with the MRC. Commissioner Bacon has expressed desire to engage on these issues, and the needs assessment committee will be interviewing her. Commissioner Johnson is now Chair of the BICC.

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

ADJOURNMENT: On January 21st, there will be a season review of kelp data. It is open to MRC members and volunteers. The Way of the Whales workshop is on Saturday. It is hosted by Orca Network, and is similar to SWU but focuses entirely on whales. There being no further business and no further comments, the meeting adjourned at 4:58pm.