

Project Updates for May 2, 2017 Meeting

Eelgrass Monitoring: The Eelgrass monitoring program is set for 2017. Ten beds will be monitored using aerial photography, underwater videography and multi beam sonar (Albert Foster). This is the last year that Gregg Ridder, Ken Urstad, and Albert Foster will participate in this project. What we will do with this project in 2018 will need to be worked out in the coming months.

Seining: The seining project has been suspended for 2017 and 2018 due to absence of future specific sites to be monitored. A draft of the final report on 8 years of seining data at the Cornet Bay shoreline restoration site has been written by Barney Boyer (NOAA Affiliate) and should be issued in the near future.

Kelp Monitoring: Lucas Hart (NW Straits Commission) held a Bull Kelp Workshop in Port Townsend on Saturday, April 15th to share plans for the upcoming field season. At least one kelp project representative from each MRC, except San Juan, was able to attend. Linda Rhodes & Debra Paros attended for Island MRC. In addition to 2017 plans, alternative opportunities such as using satellite imaging (Jeff Taylor, Jefferson) & updates on Sound IQ & similar web-based maps (Suzanne Shull) were discussed. Max Calloway, a Masters student at Evergreen working with Tom Mumford, presented results of an extensive literature search for changes in kelp forest assemblages from around the world.

2017 bull kelp field season. In addition to maintaining in-the-water surveys of beds from 2016, a new aspect for 2017 will be reporting bull kelp bed sightings through a simple on-line form. The objective is to capture a “snapshot” of bull kelp bed locations throughout Island County. Data validity will rely on redundancy (multiple reports of the same beds) & ground truth confirmation. Brief instructions & a link to the on-line form will be posted on the kelp project webpage on the MRC’s website.

Sound Water Stewards project fair. Linda Rhodes participated in Sound Water Stewards project fair in Coupeville on Monday, April 24th. She shared results & 2017 survey plans with members to recruit participants in the project.

Outreach: An intern will be hired using MRC Opportunity Funds (NWS Foundation) to focus highlighting MRC activities. Tasks will be to create on-site visibility and information for teams to use when on-the beach. Applications have been received for the Intern position. Two interviews have been conducted and more interviews are scheduled for the last week of April. Funds dedicated to public education on marine issues will be used on the following projects: Florian will be recording fresh interviews to assemble a generic video about the importance of the marine setting for Island County and the role the Island County MRC plays (Opportunity Fund). Outreach materials about issues explored by the MRC will be prepared during summer months. A fall forum is also anticipated to be held prior to September 30. The Outreach team may combine the two intern positions into one and draw from both the MRC Annual Grant (IC would process a purchase order to NWSC) and the MRC Opportunity Fund. The MRC should decide topics for white papers and the fall forum.

Smith & Minor Island Aquatic Reserve: The Reserve’s Citizen Committee is developing posters for the kiosk at Libbey Beach Park. Martha & Steve Ellis have drafted a birds-of-the-reserve poster, & Rick Baker & Linda Rhodes are working on a bull kelp poster. Drafts will probably be placed on the kiosks, to be replaced by more professional versions by graphic artists with WA Department of Natural Resources. Rick & Betty Bookheim (WA DNR) are working on protocols for the 2017 survey season. Rick will lead the harvest social survey, & Betty will lead the intertidal survey. First survey date is Friday, April 28th.

Lead Integrating Organization: No updates.

Sound Water Stewards: No updates.

WSU Extension: No updates.