

ISLAND COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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Minutes

Prepared by Anna Toledo

March 6, 2018

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

PRESENT: Barbara Bennett, Vice-Chair, presiding, Mike Bianchi, Ed Halloran, Matt Kukuk, Linda Rhodes, Ruth Richards, Kestutis Tautvydas, Kelly Zupich, Florian Graner (non-voting, technical advisor), Lori Clark, Island County DNR (non-voting), Tim Lawrence, WSU Extension (non-voting), Anna Toledo MRC Coordinator (staff) **ABSENT:** Jill Johnson, Elsa Schwartz, Mark Stamey, Frances Wood

VISITORS: Dawn Spilsbury Pucci (Island County Lead Entity Salmon Recovery), Lucas Hart (Northwest Straits Commission), William Bell (Port of Coupeville)

CALL TO ORDER: Bennett called the meeting to order at 3:34pm. **INTRODUCTIONS:** Introductions were done. **QUORUM:** A quorum was declared. **AGENDA:** Rhodes moved to approve the agenda. Tautvydas seconded. The agenda was approved. **MINUTES:** Correction on 2/6 minutes: The location should be changed to Camano Island Library. Tautvydas moved to approve the February 6, 2018 minutes as corrected. Halloran seconded. The corrected minutes were approved.

CORRESPONDENCE: The Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) sent a notification to MRC staff that the Opportunity Fund deadline has been extended through April.

Project Planning: The MRC reviewed the list of project ideas. Toledo will be attending the Commissioners' work session on March 21 to solicit feedback on the work plan. Discussion included:

Film and educational activity

- The film "Discover the Olympic Coast" and accompanying educational activity have been introduced into classrooms on the coast and have received very positive reviews.
- Including Snohomish MRC as a partner would widen the target audience.
- It would be advantageous to have this project lined up if the funding for Seahorse Siesta doesn't go through.
- Graner has heard some initial interest from schools. Further work would have to be done to confirm interest.
- Graner could put together an initial framework within a month. Work including other counties would take longer because he would have to gather additional footage.
- Zupich offered to talk to South Whidbey School District. Bianchi offered to talk to Coupeville, North Whidbey, and Camano.

Pigeon Guillemot

- Wood sent an updated project description, focusing on bluff stewardship outreach.

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- More clarification is needed about what the stewardship outreach plan entails, key messages, and target audiences.

Seahorse Siesta

- The NWSF has applied for matching funds through another grant and should know the outcome by the end of March.
- If the project does not meet its funding needs, NWSF would approach the community about completing the match or wait until the following year to apply for funding again.
- The impact of contributing towards a restoration project is significant and aligns with the MRC's restoration goals.

ACTIONS/DECISIONS/FOLLOW-UP

- **ACTION: Rhodes moved to investigate alternative options for the Opportunity Fund, including gathering more details for the video and pigeon guillemot proposals. Bianchi seconded.** The motion passed unanimously.

Outreach

- Still planning to complete a white paper on net pens. The net pen bill prohibits new or renewed leases for non-native species. This still leaves the issue of disease potential and eutrophication.
- Would like to hold joint MRC meetings with neighboring MRCs.
- Board of County Commissioners (BICC) may have suggestions for areas of outreach focus.

Eelgrass

- The eelgrass team is committed to conducting aerial photography of Whidbey and Camano and sonar of four key sites in 2018.
- Albert Foster is planning to test out sonar by kayak.
- Data have been showing consistent decline in eelgrass at Cornet Bay. This has been noted in the SWS intertidal monitoring data as well.
- Gregg Ridder may be interested in doing a ground survey of eelgrass at Cornet Bay.
- Eelgrass team is interested in continuing if this continues to be a priority for the MRC.
- The MRC supported continuation, given that it has shown local results that would not be gathered from WA DNR's regional work.
- The local eelgrass monitoring was initiated to help provide data about areas with important habitat when assessing biological impacts. County regulations now include a shoreline buffer.
- Any project within the flood zone needs to include a biological site assessment. Eelgrass and forage fish data are available on SoundIQ. SoundIQ serves as an archiving system rather than a regulatory resource.
- Eelgrass wasting disease has not been noted. Gregg sent photos of discolored eelgrass from Glendale, but DNR did not determine it to be eelgrass wasting disease. The disease has also not been associated with a decrease in bed size.

MRC and Shore Friendly Forums (Toledo/Bennett): The aging shoreline infrastructure forum is scheduled for April 21 in Coupeville and April 28 on Camano. Bennett and Toledo are

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working on a mailer to be sent to target audiences, including diking districts, canal communities, and areas with aging shoreline armor. The forum will be targeted towards community systems, though individual and commercial property owners are welcome to attend as well.

The shoreline vegetation workshop in partnership with the NWSF is scheduled for Thursday, May 3, 6-8pm at Bayview Hall.

BUSINESS ITEMS

New Member Welcome (Bennett): Bennett officially welcomed the MRC's three newest members: Kelly Zupich, Mark Stamey, and Mike Bianchi.

Sound Waters University Debrief (Bennett): Sound Waters University had 671 attendees. Rhodes presented on the bull kelp monitoring project. Bennett co-presented on ocean acidification. Graner gave the keynote address. Sessions were well-attended and participants gave positive feedback.

Group and Project Representation (Toledo): The MRC has a vacant seat on the Salmon Recovery Technical and Citizen Committee (SRTCC). Kukuk offered to sit on the committee. Tony Turpin is willing to pass along the information he gathered while working on creosote and marine debris identification to anybody who is interested in taking on that work. John Amell on Camano has indicated interest in being involved.

Coordinator's Update (Toledo): Toledo passed around a contact list for MRC members and asked for any corrections. Toledo also passed out hats for MRC members and volunteers that were purchased through the Opportunity Fund.

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.

Eelgrass Monitoring (Tautvydas): Underwater video data and Albert Foster's sonar data from 2017 are being analyzed by team members and should be completed sometime in April. Gregg Ridder won't be around to give a report to MRC in April, but will be able to do so in June. As usual, the final report will be available by Sept. 2018.

The eelgrass team met on March 1. For 2018, Gregg will continue to conduct aerial photography. Albert and other volunteers will conduct sonar at 4 sites: Cornet Bay, Monroe Landing, Holmes Harbor, and Seahorse Siesta. The sonar survey will include an underwater camera to verify eelgrass presence. The eelgrass team would like feedback from the MRC on the usefulness of their data to assist with future project planning.

Kelp Monitoring (Rhodes): This time of year is dominated by presentations about the project & its results. One presentation was given at the Sound Water Stewards' monthly meeting (Jan. 22), & there was a bull kelp session at Sound Waters University attended by 32 people (Feb. 3). An abstract for an oral presentation at WA Dept. of Natural Resource's kelp session at the Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference in April has been accepted. The project's page on the MRC website has

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been updated to include results from 2017 (including more underwater videos!). And, naturally, recruitment & planning for training for the 2018 season is underway.

Based on 2017 aerial data, approximately 21 miles of Island County shoreline have associated bull kelp. Rhodes will be presenting to the BICC about the bull kelp project.

OTHER REPORTS:

Smith & Minor Islands Aquatic Reserve (Rhodes): State funding for the Aquatic Reserves is under review, & there is currently no support for the SMIAR citizen stewardship committee, so meetings have been suspended. However, the official welcome signs designed & produced by WA Dept. of Natural Resources have been installed or ready to be installed at the access points along the west side of Whidbey Island. Rhodes will be working with Rick Baker to update the information at the kiosk.

Sound Water Stewards (Zupich):

- MRC Projects needing volunteers will be invited to the SWS Volunteer Opportunities Fair.
When: April 23rd, 2018, 10:00am -12:00pm
Where: Coupeville Recreation Hall
- Camano SWS will start a regular beach clean-up at Iverson Spit in April. Whidbey will focus on recruiting volunteers to help Stinger Anderson with WSU's clean-up efforts.
- We are currently in conversation with multiple groups that are using the Beach Watcher/SWS Intertidal Bio-Monitoring Protocol to combine our data sets, share resources, and work to get our data available online.
- Zupich is working on a new SWS brochure. The MRC agreed to be listed as one of the organizations that partners with SWS.

WSU Extension (Lawrence): WSU Extension is planning their new Camano office.

LEADERSHIP REPORTS

Chair: Bennett and Schwartz will be presenting on citizen science at the Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference.

County Lead: No report.

County Commissioners: No report.

COMMUNITY COMMENT FORUM AND Q&A FROM THE PUBLIC: Lucas Hart shared that the Northwest Straits Foundation and Commission are working on updating their Strategic Plan. They will be looking for MRC input and hope to have a draft ready by the 20th anniversary conference in November. Schwartz is on the Strategic Planning Committee. It was suggested to include a connection to County Commissioners in the Strategic Plan.

Dawn Spilsbury Pucci shared that May 23 is the Legislative Day on the Hill. SRTCC site visits will be held on April 30 (Whidbey) and May 1 (Camano). There is a public open house for the SRTCC projects on April 17 at the Camano Island library.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business and no further comments, the meeting adjourned at 5:30 pm.