

ISLAND COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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Minutes

Prepared by Kelly Zupich

March 1, 2022

ZOOM

PRESENT: Barbara Bennett, Chair, presiding, Jill Lipoti, Vice Chair, Scott Chase, Gwendolyn Hannam, Andi Kopit, Hannah Liss, Alexandra Plumb, Elsa Schwartz, Kes Tautvydas, Melanie Bacon, Island County Commissioner, Jennifer Johnson, IC DNR Manager/Island LIO Coordinator (non-voting), Kelly Zupich, MRC Coordinator (staff), Sarah Ruether IC DNR (staff) **ABSENT:** Ken Collins (notified), Ed Halloran (un-notified)

VISITORS: Jeff Whitty, NWSF, Keith Higman, Health Services Director, Leah Robison

CALL TO ORDER: Barbara called the meeting to order at 3:03pm. **INTRODUCTIONS:** Introductions were made. **QUORUM:** A quorum was declared. **AGENDA:** Hannah moved to approve the agenda. Scott seconded. The agenda was approved. **MINUTES:** Jill moved to approve the February 1, 2022 minutes. Alexandra seconded. The minutes were approved.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Josh Latterell, with the King County Water and Land Resources Division is going to be doing a study up in our area. They will be placing multiple buoys in Penn Cove and Port Susan to monitor the potential effect of wastewater discharge from King County.

- During sampling, CTD casts will be performed at each location. At the Penn Cove locations (4-7) and the buoy operated by the Stillaguamish Tribe (1) we will also collect bottle samples at the surface, 5 m, and bottom. Bottle samples will be analyzed for the following: nitrate + nitrite, ammonia, orthophosphate, silica, total N, total suspended solids, chlorophyll-*a*, pheophytin, and phytoplankton biovolume and abundance.

TRIBAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge the lands we're on today are the ancestral and current homelands of Indigenous Nations who have stewarded them since time immemorial. We respect their sovereignty, support their Treaty rights, their right to self-determination, and we honor their sacred spiritual connection with the land and water. These Indigenous Nations include the Jamestown S'Klallam, Lower Elwha Klallam, Lummi, Makah, Nooksack, Port Gamble S'Klallam, Samish, Stillaguamish, Swinomish, and Tulalip Tribes.

PROJECT REPORTS:

Hoypus Point: This proposed project will remove 350 feet of shoreline armor and debris and restore nearshore processes at Hoypus Point located on the north end of Deception Pass State Park near Cornet Bay. Project partners include Northwest Straits Foundation, Island County Marine Resources Committee, and Washington State Parks. Shore armor and debris infringe on

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and bury potential surf smelt and sand lance spawning habitat. Surf smelt and sand lance spawn in the mid to upper reaches of the beaches and are important prey for our migrating salmon in the Whidbey Basin which are critical for the recovery of Southern Resident Killer Whales. This project is set to start in the fall of 2022!

Cornet Bay: At Cornet Bay, on the northern tip of Whidbey Island, we worked with several partners to restore almost 1,000 feet of altered shoreline to a more natural condition. Our partners included the Northwest Straits Foundation, Washington State Parks, Island County, Sound Water Stewards, and Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group.

Major elements of our project involved removing a creosote bulkhead and the fill material behind it, re-grading the beach to match existing, natural, beach slope at nearby reference sites and replanting the restored shore area with native vegetation. The work is designed to improve spawning habitat for forage fish and nearshore habitat for salmon and forage fish by eliminating a source of beach scouring, expanding intertidal habitat, improving beach composition, removing a source of hydrocarbons leaching from the bulkhead and improving riparian vegetation.

We are continuing to steward the site by helping to water the newer plantings during the hot summer months along with filling back in planted areas where plants did not survive. This year we have areas that were disturbed by the State Parks installing a new dock. We will be replanting that area coming up soon. Including adding mulch and soil to areas that are in need.

Seining: The seining project started back up this year and is led by NWSF, Jason Morgan. This is a follow up to the seining that was conducted before and after the bulkhead restoration. The project originally started back in 2008. The Cornet Bay restoration was initiated because of the potential for providing critical juvenile salmon habitat for salmon migrating out of the Skagit River. The purpose of the seining project is to monitor the use of the Cornet Bay estuary by juvenile salmonids. Seining was conducted for 4 years before the restoration and for 4 years after, ending in 2016. After the restoration, they did find that the Chinook salmon, started using all the sample sites more evenly. Before the restoration there were sample sites that saw little to no activity. In 2015 and 2016 the numbers of Chinook increased significantly.

LEADERSHIP REPORTS:

Chair: We have secured Barbara Green as our facilitator for the MRC Retreat on March 19. The MRC Member survey is live, and we have about half of the committee's responses. The intention is to get 100% of the committee to respond to the survey. The survey covers demographics, skills, interests, etc.

County Commissioner: Last year on Deer Lagoon Island County mowed the entire dyke and unintentionally destroyed nesting sites for birds. Over the last month the site has been prepped by Seth Luginbill removing invasive species to prep for planting. Last Friday around 250 native plants were planted along the dyke. DNR was important in making this important project happen.

County Lead: Jenn mentioned that if there is ever an area the MRC or others see that is in need like Deer Lagoon please bring it to our attention so we can see what we can do. The Action Agenda is in the final public review period. It is available on the Puget Sound Partnership website. This will be the plan for ecosystem recovery for the next few years.

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RETREAT SUBCOMMITTEES:

So far, the DEI and education and outreach subcommittees have met. The other two, impact and citizen science will be meeting in the next week or so. These are the priorities that have been identified so far by these volunteers to bring to our retreat.

DEI:

- Discuss potential project barriers: amount of training needed, location, time of project, etc.
- Decide who are we missing including cultural, and professional backgrounds? What are the barriers? Why is their perspective important?
- Learn how do other MRC's build their relationships with local tribes?
- Reaching out to youth
- Discuss Citizen vs. Community Science

Outreach and Education:

- Coastal resiliency and armoring
- Educating children: *Discover Our Island Shores*
- Island County staff workshops
- Informal outreach: festivals, Camano 101, Marine Debris Apps, Climate Change App, and educational coasters

COORDINATOR'S UPDATE:

Volunteer Opportunity:

- Help to host a low tide beach walk with the Sound Water Stewards – April 20 at 12:30 p

OTHER REPORTS

See written reports

COMMUNITY COMMENT FORUM AND Q&A FROM THE PUBLIC:

None

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business and no further comments, the meeting adjourned at 4:00pm.