

ISLAND COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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Minutes

Prepared by Anna Toledo

June 5, 2018

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

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

VISITORS: Lisa Kaufman (Northwest Straits Foundation), Dana Oster (Northwest Straits Foundation), Gregg Ridder (presenter), Linda Ridder, Dawn Spilsbury Pucci (Island County Salmon Recovery), Janet St. Clair, John Amell

CALL TO ORDER: Schwartz called the meeting to order at 3:30pm. **INTRODUCTIONS:** Introductions were done. **QUORUM:** A quorum was declared. **AGENDA:** Rhodes moved to approve the agenda. Tautvydas seconded. The agenda was approved. **MINUTES:** Tautvydas moved to approve the May 1, 2018 minutes. Zupich seconded. The minutes were approved.

CORRESPONDENCE: The Northwest Straits Foundation provided Toledo an updated on the Opportunity Fund applications: the pigeon guillemot application will likely be approved. The Seahorse Siesta application likely won't because the project will not be completed this year due to lack of matching funding. The MRC is encouraged to apply again next year.

Educational Presentation: 2017 Eelgrass Report (Gregg Ridder, Eelgrass Team Leader):

- 2017 sites: Underwater videography and sonar conducted at six sites. Sonar was also completed at some additional sites. Aerial photography conducted for Whidbey and Camano shorelines.
- Cornet Bay:
 - o Statistically significant decrease in bed area from 2011-2017.
 - o Trend of water temperature increase
 - o Similar bed area losses correlated with temperature increase at Padilla Bay
 - o Damage from boating activity still present
- Oak Harbor: wanted to see if construction would affect eelgrass beds. Not much eelgrass in the area.
- Monroe Landing (entrance of Penn Cove): Area has been stable, though the bed has shifted location somewhat.
- Freeland: Not much change or damage from boat launches.
- Waterman: Bulkhead removal does not seem to have made an impact on eelgrass.
- Barnum Point: no eelgrass found either by sonar or aerial photography
- Eelgrass wasting disease

ISLAND COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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- Brown area by Possession Point noted in aerial photography. Turned out to be kelp.
- Glendale was identified in a presentation by NOAA as having eelgrass wasting disease. Underwater videography at Glendale did not show wasting disease.
- Eelgrass wasting disease is still not well understood. There has not been evidence showing that eelgrass wasting disease is associated with bed area loss in Puget Sound.
- Sonar
 - Good agreement with underwater video. $R^2 = 0.98$
 - Faster than underwater video and gives a complete bed picture
 - Data processing is expensive and relies on a third party (BioBase)
 - Should include visual confirmation (e.g. drop camera)
 - False positives from shallow areas, kelp, and infrastructure
 - False negatives from current sweeping the eelgrass down, steep slopes, and the boat bouncing from waves
- Future plans
 - 2018: Core site done by underwater video and sonar. Aerials of all shoreline.
 - WA DNR will process the raw video data
 - Sonar data will be processed by BioBase
 - Continue to investigate alternative methods
 - Work with MRC to develop specifications: What are we trying to understand? What level of detail is necessary?
- Discussion
 - Underwater video: can usually identify marina vs japonica. Sometimes harder to tell with younger blades
 - Sonar: does not distinguish between marina and japonica
 - Marina and japonica don't generally compete for space. Japonica makes up a small percentage of beds. It may not be necessary to distinguish between the two.
 - Brant geese have been seen using the japonica at Dave Mackie Park.

Restoration Project Updates and Potential Future Projects (Lisa Kaufman, Dana Oster – Northwest Straits Foundation):

Current Projects

- Sunlight Shores – Armor removal on a community-owned parcel on south Whidbey. The project is funded through three grants. Coastal Geologic Services is finishing the final design. Permits are complete and work is planned for this summer. The community is excited about the project and will be involved in vegetation planting and maintenance.
- Maylor Point – Removal of various types of armor on Navy property. All the permits are in place and work is planned for this summer.
- Shoreline Armor Reduction Projection (SHARP) outreach
 - Shoreline vegetation management workshop completed on south Whidbey in May: 44 attendees, 19 requests for site visits
 - Would like to conduct a workshop on Camano in the early fall

ISLAND COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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Potential upcoming projects

- Several SHARP site visits have been scheduled. Some visits were prompted by the MRC's aging shoreline structures forum.
- Hidden Beach: various types of armoring (pilings, boulders, concrete "pillows") on DNR land. Work will include a site visit, community meeting, design, and permitting. DNR can likely provide the funding.
- Possession Point State Park: Around 2006, State Parks removed a wood piling bulkhead and placed riprap and geotextile farther landward, which is now deteriorating. The building on the property is also deteriorating and State Parks plans to remove it at some point. Restoration could involve armor removal and enhanced riparian vegetation.
- Dana is working on developing a prioritized list of potential restoration projects

How the MRC can be involved

- Monitor effects of armor removal: forage fish spawning, large woody debris accumulation, elevation, vegetation, insect fallout, photo points
- Talk with neighbors/community about SHARP program and benefits of beach restoration
- Engage in community meeting at Hidden Beach (likely towards the end of summer)
- Partner with State Parks and NWSF on restoration at Possession Point (starting with seeking funding). The MRC could take this on as a full restoration project like Cornet Bay.
- Provide input on the SHARP program and workshops
- Provide input on the prioritized project list

Policy – are there any incentives for armor removal?

- It is very difficult to permit new hard armor per SMP regulations.
- Pucci and Clark are working with Island County Planning and FEMA so that applicable areas will not have to apply for a biological site assessment.
- It could be helpful for the MRC to be involved in these discussions during the next SMP update.

BUSINESS ITEMS

Educational video (Toledo): Graner shared through email the educational video "Discover the Salish Sea," developed with funding through the Snohomish County MRC. Feedback included:

- Content, flow, and narration are very well done.
- Provide recommended areas for breaks. The DVD is broken into chapters which teachers could show on different days.
- The video could also be used for adult audiences at classes or events.

Given the opportunity to apply for an alternative project through the Opportunity Fund, the MRC could apply for funding for an Island County-specific video. The video production would cost about \$4,300 and the cost of flashcards could be between \$600-\$2,000 depending on style.

ACTIONS/DECISIONS/FOLLOW-UP

ISLAND COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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- **ACTION: Wood moved to submit a proposal to the Opportunity Fund for up to \$8,000 for an IC MRC version of Discover the Salish Sea and appropriate teaching materials. Rhodes seconded. The motion passed.**

MRC presentation at NWSC meeting (Toledo): The next NWSC meeting is scheduled for Friday, June 29 from 9am-3pm on Whidbey Island (location TBA). All members are welcome to attend. Each MRC will present on a proposed project for 2018-2019. Bennett offered to present on the community forums.

Joint meeting (Schwartz): We have been discussing a joint meeting with Skagit and Whatcom MRCs in July. The proposed date is Wednesday, July 18, 11am-1pm at Padilla Bay. Toledo will talk with the other coordinators about extending the meeting time to allow for socialization and networking with the other MRCs. The meeting will include a lunch potluck. Potential topics include the Northwest Straits Initiative Strategic Plan and marine debris.

ACTIONS/DECISIONS/FOLLOW-UP

- **ACTION: Bennett moved to change the July 3rd meeting to a joint meeting on July 18th with Whatcom and Skagit MRCs. Wood seconded. The motion passed.**

Coordinator's Update (Toledo):

- Calendar invites: these are helpful for some members but not for others. Members can delete the calendar invitation if not useful.
- The Northwest Straits would like to get key officials to see MRC projects this summer to increase awareness of our work.

ACTIONS/DECISIONS/FOLLOW-UP

- **Any member** with suggestions for MRC projects to invite officials to this summer should contact Schwartz or Toledo.

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.

Forage Fish Monitoring (Richards): Dean Nelson is training to come on board as Camano's forage fish surveyor at our two sites there - Maple Grove, an index site, and Camano Island SP, a potential restoration site. He'll attend a WDFW training next week, along with Idonna Nelson and Mark Stamey. It'll be a big asset to have these three sharp minds furthering the MRC's forage fish survey goals.

Dean and Ruth were sampling at Maple Grove on Camano on May 24 and, for the first time in the 2+ years of the MRC's most recent surveying efforts, we were able to see a large number of smelt eggs in our sample with un-aided eyes. Maple Grove is our most productive site, by far, despite the bulkhead and 100% impacted uplands. Our samples are going to WDFW for microscopy now, so we won't know an exact count for some time, but we'll keep you posted.

ISLAND COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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From the south end, Dan Matlock reports the presence of surf smelt eggs at Freeland Park in the January sample from above the saltmarsh outfall pipe - a first for this location in this current round of MRC surveying. He notes that this beach station is in an area where the uplands are 100% impacted and 100% exposed to the sun. Dan Penttila had noted the year-round occurrence of smelt eggs at his sampling areas farthest south on Whidbey, so it's interesting that we are now finding them in winter both here and at Long Point.

Pigeon Guillemot Survey (Wood): Nearly 50 people attended the guillemot survey volunteer training on May 8th. We presented the new field card and changes to the protocol for 2018. These changes are a result of our new partnership with Dr. Sarah Converse of the USGS Washington Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit.

The summer survey will begin on June 11th. We will be monitoring 28 colonies on Whidbey Island. Guillemot Appreciation Days will be held on June 22 and 23rd.

Outreach (Bennett): 2 Forums on Privately Owned Aging Shoring Structures were held 4/21 and 4/28 with a total attendance of 79. Evaluations from participants and from presenters (State and County) were positive. Both the presentations and the open time for discussions were reported to be valuable. It will be interesting to see if attendance at shoreline workshops and inquiries for permits reflect follow up by those who attended, though no system is in place to formally track those indicators.

Florian has released for MRC review, his educational video about sense of place in the Salish Sea tailored for school use.

Florian has also assembled all interview footage for the informational video for County use and will complete the video as his busy summer schedule allows.

A summary white paper of the status of the net pen issue in relation to Island County remains on the current work plan. While the recent State-wide ban of net pen farming of Atlantic Salmon resolves immediate issues, it leaves some questions for the coming update of the Shoreline Management Program. A draft of this paper will be prepared by Barbara in consultation with Tom Leschine.

OTHER REPORTS:

NW Straits Commission / Foundation (Schwartz): The June NWSC meeting will be held on June 29, 10am-3pm in Island County (location TBA). Each MRC will present on a proposed project in the 2018-2019 grant year.

Shoreline Restoration and Armor Removal (Toledo): Toledo will be coordinating the development of a video showcasing testimonies of landowners who have removed a bulkhead, moved their house, or conducted other Shore Friendly activities. Any suggestions for landowners to showcase are welcome! She is also coordinating the development of interpretative signage on beach processes at Barnum Point.

ISLAND COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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Island Local Integrating Organization (Bennett): The ILIO went through a process of scoring Near-Term Actions (NTAs) on a 5-point scale for each of the following categories: alignment, likelihood of success – human, likelihood of success – technical, and contribution to recovery.

LEADERSHIP REPORTS

Chair: Schwartz noted that the MRC’s current process to approve letters of support due before a regularly scheduled meeting is that one Executive Committee member can sign after consultation with another Executive Committee member. However, to follow Open Meeting standards, the MRC should agree either to give the authority to sign to a single member (e.g. the Chair) or to have the letter come before the committee during a regularly scheduled meeting.

ACTIONS/DECISIONS/FOLLOW-UP

- **ACTION: Wood moved that all letters of support must be approved for signature at an MRC meeting. Rhodes seconded. The motion passed.**

County Lead: No report.

County Commissioners: No report.

COMMUNITY COMMENT FORUM AND Q&A FROM THE PUBLIC: Kaufman: The NWSF is working with Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group to host planting parties at Cornet Bay once per month. Toledo will forward the schedule.

John Amell attended the marine debris action plan workshop. A draft is anticipated by August. The categories in the plan are: prevention, removal, research, and coordination. MRCs will be specifically called out as partners.

Bennett distributed booklets on the process of the development of the Seattle Seawall.

Rhodes will attend the second kelp recovery workshop on Friday.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business and no further comments, the meeting adjourned at 5:09 pm.