

# ISLAND COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

[WWW.ISLANDCOUNTYMRC.ORG](http://WWW.ISLANDCOUNTYMRC.ORG)



## Minutes

Prepared by Ann Prusha

# July 7, 2020

WEBEX

**PRESENT:** Kelly Zupich, Chair, presiding; Barbara Bennett; Randy Berthold; Scott Chase; Ed Halloran; Andi Kopit; Elsa Schwartz; Kes Tautvydas; Janet St. Clair Island County Commissioner (non-voting); Lori Clark IC DNR Manager/Island LIO Coordinator (non-voting); Anna Toledo MRC Coordinator (staff); **ABSENT:** Gwendolyn Hannam (notified absence); Matt Kukuk (notified absence); Hannah Liss, Vice Chair (notified absence); Michael Bianchi (un-notified absence); Tim Lawrence (ex-officio, un-notified absence); Ann Prusha (staff, notified absence)

**VISITORS:** Dawn Spilsbury Pucci, Salmon Recovery

**CALL TO ORDER:** Kelly called the meeting to order at 3:03pm. **INTRODUCTIONS:** Introductions were made. **QUORUM:** A quorum was declared. **AGENDA:** Randy moved to approve the agenda. Elsa seconded. Anna requested that Scott provide an update on crabber outreach under the outreach agenda item. The agenda was approved. **MINUTES:** Clarification: The June minutes list the MRC Symposium on July 9, however that has been rescheduled for August 6. Anna will add that update in the minutes. Ed moved to approve the updated June 2, 2020 minutes. Randy seconded. The minutes were approved. **CORRESPONDENCE:** Washington Department of Health sent their annual letter to the MRC informing about their review of Washington's shellfish growing areas. In Island County there are no areas threatened with a downgrade in classification this year.

### **WELCOME NEW MEMBER (Kelly)**

Kelly welcomed Andi Kopit as the newest MRC member. Andi is originally from California. She has a background in entomology in invasive pest detection and pollinators. She received her Bachelor's degree from Evergreen State College. She has a Master's degree in pollination biology from Utah State University. She will be defending her thesis this fall. She is currently a teacher at South Whidbey Children's Center. Her strengths are in outreach and education and she is looking forward to engaging with the MRC's outreach work. The MRC is looking forward to working with her.

### **COSTAL RESTORATION TOOLKIT (Elsa, Dawn)**

Elsa, in her position with Restore America's Estuaries, has been working on a project to help community members plan and implement coastal restoration projects. She noted that this is separate from any Island County/MRC work. Restore America's Estuaries has several locations around the country. They will be hosting a virtual conference September 29-October 1.

Due to limited staff capacity, there is a need to provide resources and project avenues to community members who want to do restoration work all over the country. Elsa worked with many restoration professionals and community members, including Lori and Dawn outside of

# ISLAND COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

[WWW.ISLANDCOUNTYMRC.ORG](http://WWW.ISLANDCOUNTYMRC.ORG)

their County roles, on this project. It resulted in an online toolkit for community members. They conducted listening sessions with the community and restoration partners around the country. They used a web developing and marketing company, who turned the information from the listening sessions into an organized website. After this, Elsa's team went back to focus groups to get feedback. They created a website, [www.restoreyourcoast.org](http://www.restoreyourcoast.org). The main page has a 90-second video that explains how to use the toolkit, as well as a widget for accessibility. Each topic area (flooding, coastal erosion, water quality, invasive species, and wildlife habitats) has several resources identifying and addressing coastal issues. Each topic area is broken into an overview, tools and resources, contacts, funding resources, permitting info, and project examples. Invasive species and wildlife habitat topic areas are broken down further by region. There are examples of projects by topic and region. This tool is for non-professionals to learn how to do restoration projects. The contact portion within topic areas focuses on helping users learn how to find the contacts they need, rather than listing all of the permit types and contact information for every region.

Elsa invited everyone to look through the website and give her any feedback – you can submit it through the website.

There is potential to add MRC project examples. There are resources for marketing on the website. Contact Elsa for access to this.

There was discussion about doing outreach to teachers to get this tool into schools (especially high schools). There was a teacher in a focus group. Their feedback was to ensure that this website is mobile-friendly.

There was also discussion about the target audience. This potentially includes community members, so they can learn how to develop a restoration project and where they can go to get more information. It may also include restoration and shoreline professionals so they can help direct community members to the site as a resource.

Gauging impact may be achieved by tracking site usage and through social media. It would be neat to have people be able to provide feedback when they've completed a project that was assisted by the toolkit. This could be included as a tag in the project examples.

Thank you Elsa, Dawn, and Lori for all of your work on this! This is a resource that we should be aware of and recommend.

## **PORT SUSAN MARINE STEWARDSHIP AREA (MSA) UPDATE (Scott)**

Scott gave the group an overview of the history of MSAs. The MRC helped establish MSAs around Island County waters. MSAs are designations that encourage voluntary protection activities. They have no regulatory authority, as opposed to a Marine Protected Area, which restrict certain activities.

Island and Snohomish MRCs, along with other local conservation organizations, partnered to help establish the Port Susan MSA. They developed a plan in 2012. They did several events and worked a lot with the community.

# ISLAND COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

[WWW.ISLANDCOUNTYMRC.ORG](http://WWW.ISLANDCOUNTYMRC.ORG)

Scott, Elsa, Anna, and Lisa Kaufman met with Snohomish MRC staff and members to start the discussion, and decided to focus on updating the outreach materials, such as the progress report card, incorporate new information, and conduct outreach. The update could make the report card digital, which would make it easier for ongoing updates. This could be a joint Snohomish-Island MRC project in the 2021-2022 grant cycle. The group will meet again in September.

There was discussion about promotion for these projects, and where they will appear for public consumption. It is important to ensure that new projects are incorporated (Leque Island, for example). We haven't promoted some of the MSAs as much as Snohomish MRC, as they did the bulk of the work and had funding for it. We have a link on our website for the Port Susan MSA as well as basic information about all MSAs in Island County. Digitizing the progress report card can help with promotion. There was a lot of outreach to Port Susan coastline homeowners for a couple of years.

There was also discussion about commercial vs recreational fishing in MSAs. In areas considered a refuge, such as with Smith and Minor Islands area, you are trespassing if you set foot on the island, but the surrounding waters are able to be used. We are not aware of a designation that specifies regulatory distinctions between commercial and recreational fishing.

The MRC expressed interest in continuing to pursue this partnership.

## **OUTREACH NEEDS ASSESSMENT (Barbara)**

Barbara shared a handout with a timeline for outreach and communication planning, as well as a list of people to potentially interview. We will discuss this more at the August meeting.

## **COORDINATOR'S UPDATE (Anna)**

- The Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) and Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) are looking into the possibility of a grant to support voluntary eelgrass no-anchor zones. Gregg Ridder and Kes agreed that Cornet Bay would be the best place for this. There will be a call with the Deception Pass State Park manager and NWSC/NWSF. MRC expressed support for this project.
- MRC Symposium
  - Our date changed to August 6 so our three presenters can be present. Kelly will be presenting on the MRC itself, Gwendolyn will be presenting about the Hoypus and Possession Point feasibility study, and Barbara will be presenting about our communications work.
  - San Juan MRC is presenting on July 23.
  - Please let Anna know if you did not get an email from NWSC with the meeting invitation.
  - Older presentations are available – please email Anna.
  - After August, NWS is planning to host a Symposium every month or every other month. The two suggested topics are climate change and Olympia oyster restoration. Please respond to Dana's email requesting feedback about what aspects of climate change would be important to discuss at the Symposium.
  - Anna will be sending an email to MRC members to ask why they are involved in the MRC. It will be added to our Symposium presentation.
  - There was discussion about having a MyCoast training virtual forum this fall for

# ISLAND COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

[WWW.ISLANDCOUNTYMRC.ORG](http://WWW.ISLANDCOUNTYMRC.ORG)

community members, in anticipation of the king tide season.

- Future meetings
  - We have been receiving guidance about virtual vs. in-person meetings, and are encouraged to continue with virtual meetings. Many state agencies are doing virtual meetings through the end of the year.
  - Anna asked members to share their opinions about this. She encouraged members to email her their opinions if they are more comfortable with that. While members expressed a preference for in-person meetings, the virtual format seems to be working until the COVID-19 situation improves. In-person options could be considered for smaller meetings (e.g. sub-committees), in larger rooms, or outside.
- Articles:
  - Scott provided information about the crabbing season and available packets of resources for the community in [Stanwood Camano News](#).
  - MRC & Sound Water Stewards (SWS) art contest has an article in [Whidbey News-Times](#).
- Please send Anna your volunteer hours!
- Anna had a conversation with Commissioner St. Clair, Lori, and Dawn. The Board of County Commissioners is working with a policy consultant who will assist with advocacy at the state level. The MRC will be presenting to the Commissioners about our upcoming projects in August for our grant amendment. This is an opportunity to highlight areas that are important to the MRC. Are there particular issues or priorities that the MRC sees as important to bring forward? Please contact Anna if you think of anything else.
  - The group expressed bringing forward:
    - The importance of the MRC being supported to continue with monitoring work.
    - For the Special Flood Hazard Area, the Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) needs to highlight our work. The SMP is currently being updated and the MRC will be involved on the Technical Advisory Group.

## NWSC GRANT REPORTS

### Forage Fish Monitoring (Matt):

The forage fish teams have been able to restart sampling efforts. Three new volunteers are shadowing Matt and Michael at Hidden Beach to assist with monitoring there. Sampling at Cornet Bay will resume in July as volunteer activity is allowed to resume this month. Sampling at Seahorse Siesta is on hold during the summer because the substrate is only suitable for sand lance which spawn in November-February.

Update (Anna): Volunteers are eager to get back out on the beach! We actually have more volunteers ready to go than we have work for right now. Monitoring has resumed at Hidden Beach and Ala Spit. It will start at Cornet Bay and Glendale this month. Anna will send a list of volunteers to Kelly.

### Outreach (Barb/Scott):

*Outreach and Communications Plan:* The Outreach and Communications Plan was presented, in summary, to the Northwest Straits Commission on 6/26/20 and the link for the entire plan was provided. The meeting also included many themes related to Outreach and Communication

# ISLAND COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

[WWW.ISLANDCOUNTYMRC.ORG](http://WWW.ISLANDCOUNTYMRC.ORG)

including the need to interface with target audiences and sustain relationships with policy and funding relationships. The meeting also devoted an hour to discussion facilitated by the private contractor working on the NWS communication plan. Our work was complementary and well received.

Next steps will begin in July:

- review and affirm messages and themes proposed in the IC MRC Communication and Outreach Plan for use in the coming year;
- identify projects to develop into materials for the coming 2020-21 Work Plan;
- draft Needs Assessment questions and a timeline.

*Art contest:* The MRC and SWS are hosting an art contest for students in Island County entering grades 2-7. Students are invited to submit original artwork depicting a Salish Sea animal of their own design, and name their newly design species. Entries are due by Friday, July 17. More information is available [here](#).

Update: None; we will discuss next month.

Crabber outreach (Scott):

Scott has assembled packets for recreational crabbers with informational handouts, escape cord, and crab gauges. On Camano these packets are available at the Camano Annex. On Whidbey, Anna will be setting out materials on a table outside the Island County DNR office on Mondays in July from 9am-12pm. Information about the packets was shared in the [Crab Cracker](#) and [Stanwood Camano News](#).

Update: Volunteers normally hand out crabbing information at boat ramps. COVID-19 prevented that this year.

Scott included his contact information in the articles above so that he can provide an opportunity to educate them about NWS and MRC. Quite a few packets have been picked up, and Scott has gotten several emails.

There was discussion about messaging to homeowners about the responsible use of traps. SWS is doing outreach for this.

Anna has outreach cards that can be distributed to hardware stores and other areas where recreational crabbers might see them.

- Ed will help distribute in Langley
- Barbara will help distribute in Freeland
- Randy will help distribute in Oak Harbor
- Andi and Kelly are available to help as well

Hoypus Point and Possession Point Feasibility (Gwendolyn/Anna):

Blue Coast finalized the Hoypus Point and Possession Point feasibility study, which includes a conceptual design for restoration at Hoypus Point. The Northwest Straits Foundation has applied for funding through the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) and Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program (ESRP) for the next phases of work at Hoypus Point, which would include

# ISLAND COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

[WWW.ISLANDCOUNTYMRC.ORG](http://WWW.ISLANDCOUNTYMRC.ORG)

design, permitting, and construction. The SRTCC ranked Hoypus as the top SRFB proposal. Final approval will occur in September. The NWSF was invited to submit a full proposal to the ESRP Small Grants program.

Update: None.

## OTHER REPORTS

NW Straits Commission/Foundation (Elsa):

Update at meeting.

Update: Anna forwarded the NWSC meeting summary. The Northwest Straits Initiative (NWSI) annual report is available [online](#).

Please remember to submit your volunteer hours. There are much fewer this year, so it's very important that they are all submitted.

Island Local Integrating Organization (Barb):

Puget Sound Partnership has updated its vital signs. Check out the vibrant presentation of the wheel of indicators for Puget Sound recovery: <https://vitalsigns.pugetsoundinfo.wa.gov/>.

The ILIO is focusing on updating its Vital Signs and 2022 Action Agenda (AA) while maintaining close alignment with Puget Sound Partnership (PSP) Implementation Strategies (IS). Alignment is critical to winning funding and is used to incorporate and influence programs and policies. The EPA would like to see the 2022 AA utilize IS integrating regional priorities, local context and human well-being (HWB). Additionally, the EPA would like to see ongoing programs more closely aligned to the IS at all levels of government.

Over the coming months the LIO will be working on Vital Signs that reflect this County's unique priorities not only for communication with funding sources and the broader community but also for values of the community and especially property owners critical to developing "political will" to advance the next tier of shoreline restoration and conservation projects in this county. The LIO may use a "structured decision-making" approach which would start with community values and work from there to vital signs. This may be the right tool to target political will essential for the next phase of Puget Sound Recovery in this county.

Update: ILIO is launching a project to help engage landowners. They are putting out a survey, which Anna will share it when it's ready. Please take the survey and share it widely. It will also be sent to SWS.

Salmon Recovery Technical & Citizen Committee (Matt):

Update at meeting.

Update: Matt would like to step down from his role as an MRC representative to SRTCC as he feels he has not been able to participate as fully as he would like. The MRC can recommend a new representative, which will go to the Board of County Commissioners for approval. Interested members can talk to Dawn or Anna for more information. Meetings are held on third

# ISLAND COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

[WWW.ISLANDCOUNTYMRC.ORG](http://WWW.ISLANDCOUNTYMRC.ORG)

Wednesdays from 1-3pm. Members are involved in reviewing and ranking salmon recovery projects. The meetings are open to the public, and anyone is welcome to attend.

SRTCC ranked projects, and this will go to regional review in September. Hoypus Point ranked number 1, and Polnell Point number 2. These funds are fairly secure and reliable. It is expected that they will be approved and able to go under contract in October.

## LEADERSHIP REPORTS

**Chair:** The updated edition of Getting to the Water's Edge is now available through the Sound Water Stewards [website](#).

**County Lead:** None.

**County Commissioners:** Commissioner St. Clair has been attending Puget Sound Days on the Hill. She has appreciated the messaging about the good work being done, and how it benefits natural resources and the economy. She anticipates that there is enough focus and priority in this region for the continuation of our work, and she has been emphasizing support to continue ongoing work. For citizen science and monitoring, this is an opportunity to emphasize how much we are able to leverage with volunteers to advocate for further investment.

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

**ADJOURNMENT:** At the next meeting, there will be a presentation on kelp from Randy and a presentation on the kelp recovery plan from Dana Oster, as well as a conversation about the needs assessment. There being no further business and no further comments, the meeting adjourned at 4:58pm.