

ISLAND COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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ISLAND COUNTY
MARINE RESOURCES
COMMITTEE

Minutes

Prepared by Ann Prusha

September 7, 2021

ZOOM

PRESENT: Kelly Zupich, Chair, presiding, Hannah Liss, Vice Chair, Barbara Bennett, Scott Chase, Ken Collins, Ed Halloran, Jill Lipoti, Alexandra Plumb, Elsa Schwartz, Kes Tautvydas, Jenn Johnson, IC DNR Manager/ILIO Coordinator (non-voting)

ABSENT: Gwendolyn Hannam (notified absence), Andi Kopit (notified absence), Anna Toledo (notified absence), Ann Prusha (notified absence), Janet St. Clair, Island County Commissioner (notified absence), Jerilyn Ritzman (notified absence)

VISITORS: Dawn Spilsbury Pucci, IC Salmon Recovery, Hiller West, resident, Heather McCoy, WICD, Sasha Horst, NWSC, Kristin Marshall, SnoCD, Linda Lyshall, SnoCD, Sage Ince, IC Environmental Health

CALL TO ORDER: Kelly called the meeting to order at 3:00pm. **INTRODUCTIONS:** Introductions were made. **QUORUM:** A quorum was declared. **AGENDA:** Barbara moved to approve the agenda. Jill seconded. The agenda was approved. **MINUTES:** Jill moved to approve the August 3, 2021 minutes. Ken seconded. The minutes were approved.

CORRESPONDENCE: None.

TRIBAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT (Kelly)

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.

SNOHOMISH CONSERVATION DISTRICT PRESENTATION (Linda and Kristin):

Snohomish Conservation District (SnoCD) presented about the work SnoCD does in Island County (IC). Whidbey Island Conservation District (WICD) covers Whidbey Island, and SnoCD covers Camano Island. They often work together.

SnoCD provides technical and financial assistance to land managers on Camano Island. They work with residents to improve habitat, soil health, resiliency, and water quality through best management practices (BMPs). They partner with WICD for Green Stormwater Infrastructure. Their programs include youth education, Sound Horsekeeping, a commercial dairy bioswale, forest health and stewardship, agroforestry (which they are also partnering with WICD on), habitat restoration, and technical assistance to help landowners achieve land management goals.

Orca Recovery Day will be on October 16th. There are opportunities for partnership. If we have new events, we can align them with Orca Recovery Day.

ISLAND COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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Linda and Kristin opened the floor for questions and comments:

- Do you have any demonstration projects involving permeable pavement? Can Island County (IC) Public Works (PW) install this? There are many places where permeable pavement and bioswales would be helpful.
 - There are a number of permeable pavement installations in IC, including Goosefoot. It is not something SnoCD has done, but Linda can help locate the projects. She is not sure if IC PW can help install it going forward, but it is doable.
 - Scott has information that he can share about this.
 - WICD does have impervious surfacing in their parking lot.
 - It might be a good time to work with IC PW on this effort. Alex would be happy to help facilitate this. It is more expensive, but they have investigated it.
 - Please reach out to SnoCD or WICD if anyone knows of landowners interested in implementing bioswales.
- It is exciting to hear about multiple partners working together on various projects.
- What is the minimum property size to take advantage of SnoCD's services?
 - There is none; they are happy to work with anyone. There are various programs for different properties.
- SnoCD was a fantastic partner in many activities.
- What time of metrics are used for agroforestry and forest stewardship. Do they measure climate impact?
 - They do talk about climate impact often. SnoCD has a lot of services and plays an implementation role. MRC is one of the regional players that does report and share data that SnoCD uses. They rely on partners for regional monitoring.
 - They have a robust program for riparian monitoring; they watch buffers for 10-30 years to ensure that they are functioning well. They do some qualitative monitoring of fish passage projects, and they are going to be monitoring water quality from stormwater buffers along with partners.
 - There was a comment that measuring stormwater runoff quality is difficult because it needs to be done during storm events. The MRC monitors and there are regional metrics, and monitoring is very important. It could be possible to measure carbon storage while planting trees. It would be great to see monitoring in project plans.
 - There was discussion about effectiveness monitoring; it is very expensive to do this, and there is little funding available. It has been shown that if the way is cleared for fish, they do use passages.
 - Implementation monitoring for water quality is a separate issue, and how it is tied to SnoCD projects is another topic. The state does monitor, and SnoCD has used this to show water quality improvements. They know from research that these types of projects and installing BMPs do help improve water quality. They are confident that the work they are doing is helping.
 - Efforts are causing improvements, and this is difficult to track on a smaller scale. There are efforts in IC Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to determine what to track to be effective and ensure we are capturing the correct data. It would be helpful to form an MRC subcommittee to

ISLAND COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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determine which metrics are most helpful to show that project efforts are effective.

Please reach out to SnoCD if you have any more questions or want resources.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT DISCUSSION 1 OF 3: WHAT DID WE LEARN ABOUT OURSELVES? (Barb)

Barb gave an overview of the questions that were asked to stakeholders and thanked the Needs Assessment (NA) team for their work. Barb reviewed the graphs 1 and 2 from the [Needs Assessment Overview](#) and graph 8 from the [Needs Assessment Graph Archive](#).

Graph 1 (Needs Assessment Overview): What do you value about the MRC?

- These were Zoom interviews, and a database was created for each question. This listed quotes from each interview, and the NA team also identified interviewee type. They tried to find commonality in the comments.
- Our outreach and education work is valued by many interviewees.
- We are viewed as an organization with a unique voice, especially regarding our communication with IC Commissioners.
- We are regarded as an organization with integrity that uses science-based information.
- How were these responses weighted?
 - The graphs reflect the frequency that these items came forward.
- There was a comment about selection bias; education and outreach was seen as valuable, but the interviewees were all people that we made outreach to.
 - Some interviewees encouraged us to broaden the type of audience we interviewed.
- We are trusted as a voice to the Commissioners with a reputation of communicating with the community and elected officials. However, how often do we do this? How do we use this for our strategic plan?
 - We have helped the Commissioners understand issues in the past, but it does not happen frequently.
 - The need for in-depth conversation with decision-makers is there, and it is difficult to achieve.
 - Developing relationships with decision-makers around issues is important before the issue needs to be addressed. One-on-one meetings with decision-makers is important, and should happen before decisions need to be made. We can explore methods of communications to give a tangible structure to this concept.

Graph 2 (Needs Assessment Overview): Are you familiar with the MRC?

- There is room to grow here, for awareness of both state and IC interviewees. This growth needs to be strategic and fit with our own goals.
- Part of our niche could evolve into providing more education for IC employees.
- Asking interviewees what issues they are dealing with, and then determining how they fit with the marine environment helped these connections to be highlighted.
- There is a need for more visibility on the part of the MRC. For IC Planning, the MRC could insert itself in more issues, such as encouraging managed retreat and certain

ISLAND COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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shoreline mitigations. Having the MRC participate more with the IC Planning would be helpful.

- A resource for new employees would be helpful, especially considering high turnover rates.
- We are good at responding to topics as they come up, but maybe we can take more of a leadership role on some issues.

Graph 8 (Needs Assessment Graph Archive): How does/can the MRC support your work?

- There were many suggestions for this. The most common responses involved speaking in advisory and advocacy roles, and speaking with a unique voice.
- Our conversations during strategic planning will help us develop effective ways to use our voice. We need concrete structures for doing this.
- Experiential learning for new employees (rather than giving them a pamphlet) will make an impact.
- With the turnover rate in IC, it is important to be creative with our relationship with IC employees. A brochure is better than nothing. Orientation is typically short, and new employees often need to do research themselves. The Watershed Planner position in IC DNR can help bridge this gap, and work is being done on this.
- Even staff that have been involved for years have indicated that there would be benefits to more education about the shoreline, regulations, and the MRC.

MEMBERSHIP/RETREAT (Kelly)

Membership

Kelly stepping down as Chair at the end of her term. There is an interested member willing to take on this role for 2022, and this person has indicated that they would step aside if someone else wants to be Chair. Please let Kelly or Ann know if you are interested in being Chair for the next term, or if you have any questions. It is a year-long commitment.

Retreat

We will likely hold the retreat in late winter/early spring. This will give the Executive Committee (EC) time plan and ensure that we will use the time effectively, and allow members to prepare.

Kelly recently took a course about being an anti-racist organization. In this class, they recommended putting together a Change Committee. This committee would focus on issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). It would be responsible for looking into ways we can do better, and ensuring that we are being inclusive and not harming others in our decisions. Please let Kelly or Ann know if you are interested in being a part of this committee. This group could bring ideas to the retreat.

It would be great to have our subcommittees get together to discuss what they are doing and their impacts in preparation of the retreat. This would include the formation of an Impact Subcommittee (which will help identify our project's impacts and measure if the projects are doing what we want them to do, and digging into what the most impactful projects are). Other subcommittees should include: the Education Subcommittee and Community Science Subcommittee. We can discuss this more at the next meeting. A committee list will be sent out, and we can decide who would like to be on which committee at the next meeting.

ISLAND COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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COORDINATOR'S UPDATE (Hannah)

Cornet Bay Stewardship

We are receiving an additional \$8k from Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC). The EC recommends that this go towards funding salary and benefits for Cornet Bay restoration stewardship and administrative support. Thank you to Ann for all of the work you are doing. It will be a small percentage of an FTE, but will really help with that project. It is an exciting, big project, and spending time maintaining it will help us tell its story.

Elsa moved to use the additional funds of \$8,000.00 from NWSC for staff salary and benefits for performing vegetation maintenance and administrative support for Cornet Bay Stewardship. Scott seconded. The motion was approved.

Ecosystem Recovery Summit

Jenn is coordinating the Ecosystem Recovery Summit. This will be hosted by Island Local Integrating Organization (ILIO), Island County Salmon Recovery Technical and Citizen Committee (SRTCC), and MRC. It will be held virtually on October 21 from 10am-3pm.

Please reach out to Jenn, Hannah, or Ann with questions. If you registered earlier, there was a technical error that sent a notification that the event was cancelled, but it is still happening. The more voices the better – even if you can only make it to part of the event, it would be appreciated. We want to focus on our priorities and what we want to do moving forward. We will need to give a brief presentation.

Forage Fish Monitoring Event

Hannah and Ann will be discussing a forage fish monitoring event this fall. Please stay tuned for this – Ann or Hannah will send out a Doodle Poll with suggested dates when it is more hashed out.

NWSC GRANT REPORTS

Forage Fish Monitoring

Teams are continuing to monitor monthly at Hoypus Point, Cornet Bay, Sunlight Shores, Maple Grove, Hidden Beach, and Glendale. Monitoring at Seahorse Siesta is scheduled to pick back up in November.

Update: The Washington Conservation Corps crew that processes our samples has a new crew starting soon. There is a bigger crop of anchovies in Puget Sound this year. Ken will dig in to this research more, but it is good news because it means there are additional forage fish.

Kelp Monitoring

Update: Monitoring has wrapped up for the season. Hannah will be working with Ron Beier to look at data as monitoring comes to a close.

OTHER REPORTS

NW Straits Commission/Foundation (NWSC/NWSF)

Update: Barb gave an update about her work for the Shoreline Master Program Learning Group. It was great to see her work recognized. The NWS Conference is coming up, and will be virtual. They will be doing a series of virtual presentations. The first will be Thursday, November 18th from 3:30-5:00. They will be the third Thursday for four months. This year will focus on climate

ISLAND COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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change and how MRCs can play a role in local actions. A save the date will be going out soon. Caroline Gibson sadly passed away, and her memorial service will be Sunday, October 24th at the Northwest Maritime Center in Port Townsend. Please see the highlights email that Ann sent out for more details on any of these items.

Salmon Recovery Technical & Citizen Committee

Update: Crescent Creek restoration project is breaking ground tomorrow at the Seaplane Base. They are creating floodplain habitat.

WSU Extension

No updates.

LEADERSHIP REPORTS

Chair: None

County Lead: IC Commissioners, in budget meetings, have mentioned that they will be asking for programmatic presentations. This will include the MRC.

County Commissioners: None

MEMBER REPORTS

Dr. Lyda Harris with the Seattle Aquarium is working on a Quality Assurance Plan for the microplastics monitoring project.

COMMUNITY COMMENT FORUM AND Q&A FROM THE PUBLIC:

None

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business and no further comments, the meeting adjourned at 5:00pm.