

ISLAND COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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ISLAND COUNTY
MARINE RESOURCES
COMMITTEE

Minutes

Prepared by Kelly Zupich

February 1, 2022

ZOOM

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

VISITORS: Sage Ince, IC DNR, Sasha Horst, NWSC, Lisa Kaufman, NWSF, Clea Barenburg, IC DNR

CALL TO ORDER: Barbara called the meeting to order at 3:02pm. **INTRODUCTIONS:** Introductions were made. **QUORUM:** A quorum was declared. **AGENDA:** Kes moved to approve the agenda. Jill seconded. The agenda was approved. **MINUTES:** Jill moved to approve the January minutes. Scott seconded. The minutes were approved. **CORRESPONDENCE:** None.

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.

WELCOME

Barb asked the committee and visitors - What are you most excited about from the last year? Or what you are looking forward to? Multiple people shared their thoughts on which items they were excited about. Here are a few of those comments.

- Enjoyed coming up to speed as an MRC Member.
- Getting to work on the needs assessment and making connections with local partners and stakeholders.
- I really enjoyed the Eelgrass story map and the work that Ann Prusha did to create that.
- I think its impressive that all the things we listed were able to get done during a pandemic year.
- A lot of good opportunities are coming up and excited for Kelly to be the new MRC Coordinator.

NORTHWEST STRAITS OVERVIEW (Elsa)

Elsa gave a brief overview of the NW Straits Initiative. The initiative is made up of the 7 MRC's, the NW Straits Commission, and the NW Straits Foundation.

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1980's-1990 National Marine Sanctuary Proposal by NOAA due to declining marine species in Puget Sound. The sanctuary idea was not supported locally because they would lose the ability to manage their local marine resources. In 1998, Patty Murray and Jack Metcalf, came together to develop the Murray-Metcalf Commission in response to a critically important area declining. This later became the NW Straits Commission.

The Commission believes that county-based MRC's can provide the foundation for scientifically sound, locally supported marine conservation measures. The mission of the MRC's guided by sound science and the needs of the NW Straits marine ecosystem, is:

1. to address local marine issues,
2. recommend remedial actions to local authorities, and
3. build local awareness of the issues and support the remedies.

The Murray-Metcalf Commission then created the NW Straits Commission as a form of support for the MRC's. The NW Straits Commission would be established to provide an ecosystem focus on the marine resources of the NW Straits as a whole, help mobilize science to focus on key priorities, guide and provide resources and serve as a forum for coordination and consensus-building.

The NW Straits Commission serves as a board of directors that works by consensus and is comprised of representatives from each of the seven MRC's in the NW Straits region, five representatives appointed by the governor, one of whom represents the Puget Sound Partnership, and one appointee representing tribes. They then decided staff were needed to get the work done.

A lot of our funding comes from the NW Straits Commission which is a state agency. That funding comes from the state and federal resources. That funding is housed with the Department of Ecology. The NW Straits Foundation is the nonprofit arm of the NW Straits Initiative. The foundation has more flexibility when it comes to funding sources and how they spend their money.

NW Straits Foundation Mission: To protect and restore the health of the NW Straits' marine resources by prompting and implementing science-based restoration and stewardship, enhancing collaboration, and attracting resources for the work of the NW Straits Initiative.

- Derelict Fishing Gear Removal Project: 5,811 nets removed; 6,175 crab pots removed
- Beach & Nearshore Restoration Projects

Priorities of the NW Straits

- Supporting MRC's (funding, technical, operational)
- Improve regional coordination
- Improve ability to measure results and share results

It is up to the MRC's to provide input to the NW Straits about local priorities.

STRATEGIC PLANNING DISCUSSION

All members and guests split up into four breakout rooms. Each room was geared towards one of these four topics. Community/citizen science, impact, education & outreach, and JEDI/DEI. Barb asked each room to discuss and think about these following questions. What have we accomplished in these

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domains already? What are the next goals that you would like to approach on this? What would that look like?

Once we gathered back in the main room a person from each room shared a short summary of what they came up with.

- **Community Science:** Provide more transparency and accessibility to the project and identify the skills we need. We recognize we have a diverse range of skills among our citizen science volunteers. Additionally, taking the work and finding a way to synthesize the data we collect into a form that is accessible to our County Commissioners and others.
- **Education & Outreach:** We received numbers of invitations to offer training for county staff. Will look for funding.
- **JEDI/ DEI:** We need to look inward at the MRC committee and look at diversity of thought to categorize our current committee makeup and look outward at the census data to see how our projects/education are meeting the needs of our community. The plan is to create and implement a survey of our current committee members before the retreat. The survey would include items like interest and skills.
- **Impact:** MRC does so much amazing work to share with the Commissioners. How to show impact? What metrics can we use to see change of behavior?

COORDINATOR'S UPDATE

- Location options for the retreat are Cornet Bay Retreat Center and Padilla Bay. Kelly to reserve a location that is available and meets our needs.
- Retreat facilitator bids: 2 of the 3 bids came in over the \$2,500 budget
- Barb moved to approve the Executive Committee to be empowered to select a facilitator based on skill, not price, and will provide a justification to be reviewed by the county system. Jill seconded – motion approved

NWSC GRANT REPORTS

Hoypus Point Restoration

Update: Lisa Kaufman is getting ready to submit the permits to the county. That and the HPA are the last steps in the permitting process. The county permit is a no fee exemption which puts this type of permit in the same category as in-stream work allowing habitat restoration work to be more streamlined. Once that is done, we will finalize the design. We should be ready to take bids in March for contractors to begin work in the Fall.

Cornet Bay Stewardship

Update: We need volunteers willing to steward this site especially in the summer. The phase 2 area has volunteer Sitka spruce trees popping up.

Shore Friendly

Update: Ann Prusha has started as the new Program Coordinator. Please feel free to reach out to her with any questions. She can be reached at a.prusha@islandcountywa.gov or 360-678-2347. Please share information about the Shore Friendly program widely. You can direct people to Ann, or the [Shore Friendly website](#). If anyone is interested in a Shore Friendly site visit or knows someone who is, they should get started by filling out a site visit request [here](#).

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OTHER REPORTS

Shoreline Management Plan Learning Group

Update: Membership to this group is at about 30 members. Last week there was a very animated panel discussion. This group is really focused on equipping our MRC Members to be champions within their jurisdiction using the SMP.

Sound Water Stewards

Update: This coming weekend is Sound Waters University. Kris Holley has taken over for Linda Ade Ridder as president of the Sound Water Stewards board. Kelly Zupich the Executive Director for SWS is leaving her position. They will be seeking a qualified candidate to fill her role. Volunteer training is coming up.

ILIO

Update: We are still seeking input on the draft Action Agenda Update. If anyone is interested in reviewing please let Kelly know. We also will be receiving some funding hopefully coming soon, in the range of \$500,000 to 750,000. We will be reaching out to our partner groups to get feedback on future project priorities.

LEADERSHIP REPORTS

Chair: None.

County Lead: None.

County Commissioners: None.

COMMUNITY COMMENT FORUM AND Q&A FROM THE PUBLIC:

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business and no further comments, the meeting adjourned at 5:05pm.