

ISLAND COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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Minutes

Prepared by Anna Toledo

April 3, 2018

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

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

VISITORS: Dawn Spilsbury Pucci (Island County Lead Entity Salmon Recovery), Matt Colston (Island County Environmental Health), William Bell (Port of Coupeville)

CALL TO ORDER: Schwartz called the meeting to order at 3:31pm. **INTRODUCTIONS:** Introductions were done. **QUORUM:** A quorum was declared. **AGENDA:** Frances moved to approve the agenda. Richards seconded. The agenda was approved. **MINUTES:** Halloran moved to approve the March 6, 2018 minutes. Zupich seconded. The minutes were approved. **CORRESPONDENCE:** None.

NTA Letter of Support (Clark/Toledo): The City of Oak Harbor is submitting three Near-Term Actions (NTAs) for restoration projects at the Oak Harbor Marina. Project partners listed in the proposal are requested to submit a letter of commitment. The MRC has previously expressed support for these projects and would assist with monitoring and outreach if the projects are funded.

ACTIONS/DECISIONS/FOLLOW-UP

- **ACTION:** Stamey moved to provide the three letters of commitment as sent. Tautvydas seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Kelp Recovery Plan Update (Rhodes): Rhodes attended a Kelp Recovery Plan workshop hosted by the Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC). Federal support for kelp recovery is primarily driven by protecting habitat for rockfish. Washington Department of Natural Resources is the lead agency for monitoring where kelp is located. Their focus area is on the Strait of Juan de Fuca to Port Townsend.

Overall, average kelp presence appears to be steady, but local drivers seem to be creating localized changes. The western side of South Sound has lost kelp. There is some still present on the eastern side by Tacoma Narrows. Central Sound is losing kelp beds. North Sound is doing okay, but it is important to keep monitoring for any changes. There is also interest in utilizing satellite imagery to monitor kelp beds.

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Workshop participants identified several data gaps, and another workshop will be held in six months. Rhodes will be presenting about the MRC's kelp monitoring at the Commissioners' work session on April 18.

PROJECT PLANNING

Shellfish sampling (Matt Colston): Matt Colston, Island County Environmental Health, has been coordinating with Washington Department of Health (DOH) regarding volunteer opportunities for shellfish sampling and beach sign posting. Interested volunteers would be added to a database and would be contacted as needed to assist with sampling shellfish and/or putting up and taking down beach closure signs. DOH would provide the volunteer training and all the materials necessary to conduct the sampling. The beach signs would be available at the Island County annexes on Camano, South Whidbey and North Whidbey.

Schwartz, Halloran, and Wood offered to be on the volunteer list. Colston will follow-up with additional details.

Partnerships with San Juan and Jefferson MRCs (Toledo): The Jefferson and San Juan County MRCs have reached out to inquire about our MRC's interest in collaboration on a couple of their projects:

Jefferson MRC – Stormwater Awareness: JMRC would share print-ready articles on actions residents can take to minimize impact on stormwater quality. They can also meet with our MRC or community association group to talk about key strategies and local actions they've taken.

The MRC expressed support for this work and could be help provide feedback on materials. This might also be a topic for a future workshop.

San Juan MRC – Boater Awareness on Protection of Southern Resident Killer Whales: SJMRC will distribute flags for boaters to hoist when whales are spotted in the area. They would like help identifying local champions (marinas, boat vendors/charters), distributing flags, and gauging flag use/effectiveness.

The MRC would like to be involved in boater awareness, but is unsure that utilizing flags would be the best method, as it may draw more attention and activity to the area. We would like to have more information from SJMRC about the specifics of their plan. This topic would be interesting for a larger discussion, perhaps as a topic at the MRC conference. Other outreach suggestions included signage or videos at marinas and including whale protection information and regulations in boater licensing requirements.

Crabber Outreach (Schwartz): The Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) is conducting crabber outreach again this summer regarding best practices to not lose crab pots. The NWSF can provide outreach materials to MRCs. Discussion included:

- Distribute materials to locations where licenses are sold
- Have materials available at State Parks
- Host Crabbing 101 classes, like what is offered at Sound Waters University

ACTIONS/DECISIONS/FOLLOW-UP

- **Zupich** will check if there is interest within SWS.

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- **Bianchi** can organize a Crabbing 101 class at the Naval Air Station if connected with the instructor.
- **Tautvydas** can distribute materials at fishing clubs.
- **Schwartz** and **Stamey** are interested in coordinating the outreach efforts.

MRC Opportunity Fund (Schwartz): The MRC considered the three projects which have been discussed for possible funding through the Opportunity Fund:

- Pigeon guillemot coordinator
 - The pigeon guillemot team has been partnering with Dr. Converse at USGS and UW who would like to evaluate the existing pigeon guillemot data and help fine-tune data collection cards.
 - The coordinator would assist in coordinating with Dr. Converse, update the website, and promote volunteer and community engagement.
 - Whidbey Audubon is contributing \$3000 to the project.
- Educational video and school activity
 - Lots of support from local schools.
 - Sno-Isle Libraries is open to hosting the materials at their libraries to make them available to homeschool students.
 - Video would be Island County-focused or regionally-focused.
- Seahorse Siesta restoration match
 - The project is ready to go and just needs the final match.
 - About \$23,000 of match is needed. It is unclear whether the remaining match would be acquired this year.
 - If the Seahorse Siesta project did not move forward, we could apply for another project through the Opportunity Fund immediately.

ACTIONS/DECISIONS/FOLLOW-UP

- **ACTION: Wood moved to reconsider the motion from the February 6th meeting to put forward an application of \$10,000 for Seahorse Siesta, given new information presented. Rhodes seconded.** Discussion below. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion:

- The Opportunity Fund is designed to be opportunistic and can be used to go above and beyond what is in the work plan.
- Some hesitation on applying for Seahorse Siesta because it is on private property.
- Having the MRC listed as a partner on a restoration project like Seahorse Siesta would help get the MRC's name into regional restoration conversations.
- There is greater opportunity for Seahorse Siesta to get funding from other sources. The pigeon guillemot and video projects would be funded largely or entirely through the MRC's funding.
- The video could be included in the 2018-2019 annual funding, and funding to start work may be available in the current grant.
- The pigeon guillemot work with Dr. Converse will help integrate the findings with other seabird monitoring work.

ACTIONS/DECISIONS/FOLLOW-UP

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- **ACTION: Rhodes moved to put forward an application of \$2000 for the Pigeon Guillemot project and an application of \$8000 for the Seahorse Siesta restoration project through the MRC Opportunity Fund, and seek funding for the educational video through the existing annual grant and next year's grant application. Kukuk seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

2018-2019 Work Plan (Schwartz): Given the time constraints of the meeting, Toledo will submit the 2018-2019 workplan as a draft document. The MRC will review and approve the final document at the following meeting.

BUSINESS ITEMS

Coordinator's Update (Toledo): No further updates.

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): We are glad to be returning to the tidal rhythms that allow us to choose a survey day from more than just the one or two that have low enough tides during daylight!

Also, Ruth is starting to orient Dean Nelson to our survey on Camano. A Camano resident, Dean is willing to work in to being the lead for our sites over there, ably assisted by his wife, Idonna, when she's available, and a couple of dedicated Camano volunteers.

MRC members are invited to join us on a survey anytime we're going out.

Pigeon Guillemot Survey (Wood): No further updates.

Outreach (Bennett): Plans for the forums on 4/21 and 4/28 are in place and invitations/fliers will go out before the 4/3 meeting. In addition, Elsa and Barb will be presenting at the Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference (4/4-6) on strategies to strengthen citizen science through dialogue with audiences, annual review and planning priorities.

OTHER REPORTS:

NW Straits Commission / Foundation (Schwartz): The next NWSC meeting is 3/30. Meeting highlights will be distributed after the meeting.

Shoreline Restoration and Armor Removal (Toledo): The Shoreline Vegetation workshop in partnership with NWSF is scheduled for Thursday, May 3, 6-8pm at Bayview Hall. Information on this workshop is included in the invitation flier to the MRC forum.

Island Local Integrating Organization (Bennett): No updates.

LEADERSHIP REPORTS

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Chair: William Bell, Port of Coupeville Commissioner, expressed interest in providing a connection between the Port and the MRC and serving as a non-voting advisor.

ACTIONS/DECISIONS/FOLLOW-UP

- **ACTION:** Rhodes moved to appoint William Bell as a non-voting technical advisor. Stamey seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

County Lead: No report.

County Commissioners: No report.

COMMUNITY COMMENT FORUM AND Q&A FROM THE PUBLIC

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business and no further comments, the meeting adjourned at 5:37 pm.