

ISLAND COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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Minutes

Prepared by Anna Toledo

March 5, 2019

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

PRESENT: Barbara Bennett, Vice-Chair, presiding, Randy Berthold, Mike Bianchi (WebEx), Jodi Crimmins, Ed Halloran, Matt Kukuk (WebEx), Linda Rhodes (WebEx), Kes Tautvydas, Kelly Zupich, Lori Clark, Island County DNR (non-voting, WebEx), Janet St. Clair, Board of Island County Commissioners (non-voting), Anna Toledo MRC Coordinator (staff) **ABSENT:** Tim Lawrence, Elsa Schwartz, Mark Stamey

VISITORS: Dana Oster (Northwest Straits Commission), Gwendolyn Hamman (NW Environmental Services), Paul McElwain (Sound Water Stewards, WebEx), Robert Warren (resident)

CALL TO ORDER: Bennett called the meeting to order at 3:09pm. **INTRODUCTIONS:** Introductions were done. **QUORUM:** A quorum was declared. **AGENDA:** Halloran moved to approve the agenda. Tautvydas seconded. The agenda was approved. **MINUTES:** Correction: Graner was in-person, not on WebEx. Zupich moved to approve the February 19, 2019 minutes as corrected. Berthold seconded. The minutes were approved. **CORRESPONDENCE:** None.

2019-2020 Work Plan (Toledo):

Orca Request for Proposals (RFP): The MRC received an RFP from the Northwest Straits Foundation for outreach work regarding orca recovery, with an emphasis on non-point source pollution. MRCs are encouraged to collaborate with each other. Discussion points included:

- Explore collaborating with Orca Network
 - Develop a generic handout: how does orca recovery fit with all the work we do?
 - o Snohomish County MRC is in the process of developing a handout of 8 things you can do for orca recovery
 - o Handout could be printed or available online
 - Build on forums/events that we're already planning on
 - o Incorporate orca recovery into Family Day idea
 - Target youth and families. For students: could present a basic challenge (e.g. how to make water quality improvements to impact orca recovery), and have them present a poster or other display. Could tie to food webs.
 - Opportunity in June to borrow life-size inflatable killer whale from NOAA.
 - Outreach topics:
 - o Situational awareness: how much the population has declined. Segue to actions.
 - o What can you as an individual do?
- **Follow-up:** Rhodes will reach out to Orca Network for ideas and interest in collaboration. Berthold, Zupich, and Crimmins offered to help with planning.

Work plan

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The MRC reviewed the projects on the draft work plan spreadsheet that were not covered at the previous meeting:

Eelgrass:

- The team has capacity for conducting underwater monitoring at 1-2 sites. For 2019 and 2020, the team plans to monitor Cornet Bay. Cornet Bay has shown a decrease while other sites have shown no significant change. The team will not conduct sonar, and do not need the \$2500 originally budgeted for BioBase.
- Budget: \$500 for fuel, boat hauling, and minor equipment repairs.
- Will be recruiting volunteers interested in observing boat protocol and continuing into future years.
- Washington Department of Natural Resources is interested in the data and has offered to analyze the raw data.
- The Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) is exploring making the anchor-free zone a regional project.
- Is there a standard protocol for water parameters at every monitoring site? The MRC does not have standardized methods for water quality monitoring across projects. Each project decides what information is relevant to gather for that project.
- Incorporate eelgrass data into maps for SMP update.

Outreach:

- For 2019: forums on aging shoreline structures, begin to incorporate information on coastal resiliency.
- For 2020: continue to build on previous forums. Develop 3-year plan for forum topics.
- Plug in with local community events that are already planned
- Begin work around plastics (e.g. Plastic Free Salish Sea)
 - o Partner with Waste Wise
 - o Advise event organizers on how to reduce plastics
 - o Include information on plastic reduction when issuing event permits

Restoration:

- The Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) has a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) that might be able to help move forward a feasibility study on one of the projects identified in the potential restoration project list.
- Hoypus Point and Possession Point both offer potential restoration opportunities that could be explored in a feasibility study. Hoypus Point could make a good collaboration with Oak Harbor High School. It ties into the Cornet Bay project, but has less visibility than Possession Point.
- Monitoring:
 - o Monitoring needs can overreach capacity. Need to recruit and train citizen scientists.
 - o Monitoring at restoration sites usually includes monthly forage fish monitoring and annual (late spring/summer) monitoring of beach wrack, large woody debris, and insect fallout.
 - o Schools (ecology clubs, AP biology classes) may be interested in helping with monitoring. Crimmins offered to serve as liaison to Oak Harbor schools.

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- **Follow-up: Toledo** will follow-up with NWSF for budget details on NFWF grant for feasibility study.

Creosote

- Toledo reached out to Washington DNR's creosote removal program coordinator to inquire whether there are areas in Island County where additional funding could be useful in removing creosote, and has not heard back. Toledo will continue to follow-up.
- Snohomish County MRC is hiring a marketing team to design a marketing strategy to promote and implement the MyCoast app. They will host webinar at end of year.

BUSINESS ITEMS

Video outreach (Toledo): Rhodes had suggested having a page on the MRC website dedicated to videos that the MRC has produced as well as public videos on other relevant topics. Suggestions included the Shore Friendly videos and Plastic Free Salish Sea. Toledo will work on developing a page on the website, and would welcome further video suggestions.

Coordinator's Update (Toledo):

- Quarterly update: Toledo will give a quarterly update to the Board of Island County Commissioners (BICC) on March 6. Highlights will include the launching of the "Discover Our Island Shores" film, classroom activity, and art contest; the MyCoast app; and following up on the pinto abalone letter sent to the BICC.
- April meeting: Karin Roemers-Kleven from the San Juan County MRC will present on the Plastic Free Salish Sea program.
- Oak Harbor Marina restoration feasibility project: The funding approved through the Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program is now in draft contract. Matching funds are proposed through the Salmon Recovery Funding Board, and if approved would become available in July.

NWSC GRANT REPORTS

Forage Fish Monitoring (Bennett): With thanks to Ruth for her leadership of this project since 2016 and volunteers on both islands, this project has collected samples monthly from six Whidbey and two Camano sites, and has begun to build a team of samplers. Next steps this year will be to 1) confer with the Northwest Straits and WDFW about sites of importance and options for frequency of sampling; 2) consider ways to increase capacity for sampling and engage more residents in this project (students, beach communities); and 3) recruit, train and organize volunteers to put plans into action.

Outreach (Bennett): Following plans organized with local school systems, the new film developed by Florian Graner "Discover Our Island Shores" will be used with a classroom activity about marine food webs for local elementary students this spring. The film follows a harbor seal around the waters of Island County and the Salish Sea to teach students about local marine habitats and species, and instill a sense of place. To complete deliverables in the current grant cycle ending September 2019, a forum will be scheduled for the spring/summer to focus on aging shoreline structures that are privately owned and sea level rise in collaboration with the Shore Friendly program; quarterly newsletters will continue - next due March 2019; and the monitoring inventory will continue to be updated.

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Bennett and Toledo will be meeting with Hugh Shipman (Department of Ecology) and Nicole Faghin (Washington Sea Grant) to discuss ideas for the summer forum on aging shoreline structures and climate resiliency.

Eelgrass Monitoring (Tautvydas): No further updates.

Kelp Monitoring (Rhodes): Rhodes participated in the bull kelp restoration workshop organized by the NWSC.

OTHER REPORTS

NW Straits Commission/Foundation (Schwartz): The Northwest Straits Initiative retreat is scheduled for March 21-22.

Shoreline Restoration and Armor Removal (Toledo): The Sunlight Shores planting party is scheduled for Tuesday, March 19, 9:30am-12:30pm. There will be a potluck following the planting party. MRC members are encouraged to participate and invite others!

Island Local Integrating Organization (Bennett): No updates.

Smith & Minor Islands Aquatic Reserve (Rhodes): The Citizen Stewardship Committee has not been meeting due to a lack of funding support.

Salmon Recovery Technical & Citizen Committee (Pucci/Kukuk): No updates.

Sound Water Stewards (Zupich): SWS is hosting a speaker series at the Bayview Cash Store on Wednesday nights at 7pm from March 6 to April 10. Each speaker has a different focus on science, art, and history of the Salish Sea. More information can be found at: <https://soundwaterstewards.org/web/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Speaker-series-2019-2.png>

WSU Extension: No updates.

LEADERSHIP REPORTS

Chair: No further updates.

County Lead: No further updates.

County Commissioners: No further updates.

COMMUNITY COMMENT FORUM AND Q&A FROM THE PUBLIC: Gwendolyn Hamman is a prospective MRC applicant, and has a background in taxonomy and water quality, and is interested in water quality projects on the MRC.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business and no further comments, the meeting adjourned at 5:02 pm.