



# SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the **January 8, 2015** meeting, held at the Skagit County Administration Building (9:00am to 11:00am)

## Attendees:

- **MRC Members Attending:** Tracy Alker, Morty Cohen, Jay Lind, Christine Woodward, Liz Lovelett, Kari Odden, Paul Dinnel, Betsy Stevenson, Julie Barber, Jamey Selleck
- **MRC Members Absent:** Teri Switalski
- **Others Attending:** Todd Woodard, Samish Indian Nation DNR; Nathan Biletnikoff, Shell Refinery; Pete Haase, citizen; Richard Brocksmith, Skagit Watershed Council; Tim Manns, Skagit Land Trust; Brenda Cunningham, Skagit Land Trust; Sasha Horst, Northwest Straits Commission

**Call to Order and Introduction:** Kari Odden chaired the meeting which began at 9:05 a.m.

**Approval of Minutes:** The December 11, 2014, MRC meeting minutes were approved as written.

## Public Comments:

- Pete Haase shared that the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) created new signs for the Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve. One sign will be placed along the road near the trestle on the east side of Fidalgo Bay, one will be placed on the south side of Fidalgo Bay along Fidalgo Bay Road near the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort, and another sign will also be placed at the parking lot at 34<sup>th</sup> Street where the Reserve begins at the Tommy Thompson Trail. In addition, the Department of Transportation will likely place a very large sign along highway 20, right across from the golf course.

**\*Action Item:** *Pete will look into the possibility of getting a sign made for the kiosk along the Tommy Thompson Trail between the condos and the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort.*

## Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Report, Christine Woodward:

- **Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative (NWSI) Strategic Plan:** The NWSC is seeking final additions to include in the three year strategic plan. In particular, projects or actions vetted by the MRC that will help achieve goals in the plan over the next three years. Additional revision requests are due by January 20<sup>th</sup> so it can be presented at the NWSC meeting on Jan 30<sup>th</sup>.

**\*Action Item:** *Per consensus of the Committee, Skagit MRC will include the Salish Sea Stewards program in the education and outreach section of the plan.*

- **NWSC Retreat:** March 12-13, 2015 at Padilla Bay. It is yet to be determined whether or not the retreat will be one or two days.

## Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) Report, Jay Lind:

- **NWSF Executive Director Status:** The Foundation will hold a meeting on January 16, 2015 to determine the direction to take to hire a new Director including possibly going through a head hunter.
- **NWSF Grants:** The Foundation received grant funding from the Puget Sound Marine and Nearshore Grant Program for "Landowner Incentives to Reduce Puget Sound Shoreline Armoring". This will include at least one shoreline landowner workshop and site consultations in Skagit County. The Foundation was also recently awarded a \$15,000 grant from the Puget Sound Marine and Nearshore Grant Program for education and outreach for Bowman Bay and other selected shoreline restoration sites.

## Administrative Report, Tracy Alker:

- **Contracts:** The contract with the Padilla Bay Foundation for the Salish Sea Stewards/Beach Naturalist project just got signed this week. It is anticipated that the contract with the Puget Sound Restoration Fund for the pinto abalone restoration project will get signed in the next couple of weeks.
- **Grant Progress Reports:** Grant progress reports and volunteer hours are due January 16. Tracy thanked those MRC members who have already submitted volunteer hours and project updates.

**\*Action Item:** *MRC members will submit project updates and volunteer hours by January 9.*

- **Oil Spill Response and Preparedness Workshop:** The Padilla Bay Reserve conference room has been reserved for February 25 from 1:00pm to 4:00pm. The consulting firm, Veda Environmental, has been contracted by the Northwest Straits Foundation to plan and coordinate the workshops. They are in the

process of confirming speakers and finalizing the agenda. The main purpose of this workshop is to help local officials and emergency personnel understand their role in an oil spill incident. The workshops will also be open to MRC members and the public. Todd Woodard contacted the Washington State Department of Ecology and the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife about the possibility of providing HAZWOPER training to volunteers who want to help with oil spills. Unfortunately, there really aren't any good funding mechanisms for oil spill response training for volunteers at this time. However, it is on their radar and they are interested in looking into different options.

- **Report to the Board of County Commissioners:** Tracy, Jay, and Kari plan to provide the MRC's 2014 annual report to the Board of County Commissioners sometime in February or March.
- **MRC Project Proposal Development:** Skagit MRC will need to start the process of identifying and prioritizing potential project ideas and developing new proposals for the next round of grant funding at the February MRC meeting.

*\*Action Item: MRC members will send project ideas to Tracy to compile into a list for the February MRC meeting.*

### MRC Officer Elections

MRC officer elections were held for the Chair and Vice-Chair positions as well as the NWSC Alternate Representative. The following MRC officers were appointed for a period of one year per consensus of the Committee.

- **MRC Chair:** Jay Lind
- **MRC Vice-Chair:** Jamey Selleck
- **NWSC Alternate Representative:** Kari Odden

*\*Action Item: The MRC will elect a new NWSC representative to replace Christine at the May or June MRC meeting.*

### Marine Protection Assessment, Presented by Kari Odden

Skagit MRC partnered with the Skagit Land Trust to complete the Marine Protection Assessment. This project was funded in part by the MRC with federal United State Environmental Protection Agency funding through a grant awarded to the NWSC/Skagit MRC via the Puget Sound Partnership. The project focused on using spatial analysis to identify shoreline reaches (rather than individual properties) that are both ecologically important and have opportunities for protection. There are two Marine Ecosystem Conservation Targets that were analyzed and prioritized based on specific values criteria obtained from several different data sources: 1. Shorelines critical for ecosystem processes (i.e. unmodified natural bluffs, beaches, estuaries, and tidelands) and 2. Important nearshore habitats and species. A tidelands analysis was done separately. A two-step approach was used to complete the assessment. Step one: A conservation values analysis to identify the reaches that ranked highest for protection and Step two: A feasibility analysis for those reaches that ranked the highest. Out of the 53 reaches that ranked high for conservation values, only 27 ranked high for protection feasibility. These priority reaches are located along the shores of Skagit Bay, Padilla Bay, Samish Bay, Guemes Island, and Sinclair Island. This report is available on the Skagit MRC website: [www.skagitmrc.org](http://www.skagitmrc.org).

Next Steps: The Skagit Land Trust (SLT) recently received a grant from the Rose Foundation to begin building capacity for marine shoreline conservation and landowner outreach, with a focus on northern Skagit County coastal wetland protection sites. This project will include the development of a legal template for shoreline conservation easements and will also fund a landowner outreach campaign and acquisition feasibility analyses for three to five priority shoreline parcels. The SLT's ten year goals are to protect one mile of marine shoreline and work with partners to restore 1/2 mile.

*\*Action Item: Kari is seeking input in developing a project evaluation tool for ranking individual marine shoreline projects.*

### Project Status & Discussion

- **Salish Sea Stewards/Beach Naturalists:** Morty, Tracy, and Pete had a meeting with the new volunteer coordinator Catherine Buchalski last month to start the planning process for the 2015 Salish Sea Stewards volunteer training program. The committee identified several priority topics that will be covered and Catherine is in the process of contacting and confirming speakers for the training. The training program will be around 40 hours (27 hours of in class training and 13 hours of hands-on training in the field). The classroom training will take place at the Padilla Bay Reserve Thursday afternoons from 3:00pm to 6:00pm starting March 5 through April 30, 2015. The purpose of the training is to build a strong core of volunteers to help with MRC and partner projects. The training will take place at Padilla

Bay under Padilla Bay's new volunteer program called the Coastal Volunteer Partnership. The Coastal Volunteer Partnership will serve as an administrative umbrella for several partners who have similar goals and needs for volunteers including the Skagit MRC, Friends of Skagit Beaches, the Skagit County Clean Water program, the Padilla Bay Foundation, and the Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve. There will be an open house for the new Coastal Volunteer Partnership program on Friday, January 30 at 1:00 pm at Padilla Bay.

- **Shannon Point Nearshore Restoration:** The project redesign is still under review and awaiting approval by the City of Anacortes and Western Washington University. The redesign includes reusing the rock upland as a retaining wall to give the property owners a little more assurance for protection.
- **Bowman Bay Nearshore Restoration:** The Northwest Straits Foundation is currently going through the permitting process for the riprap removal at Bowman Bay. Construction will begin in September, 2015. The Foundation was recently awarded a \$15,000 education and outreach grant at selected shoreline restoration sites, including Bowman Bay. The proposal includes interpretive signage, a special event/signage unveiling, low-tide beach walks, website development, a video, and volunteer planting parties. Volunteers continue to monitor the beach for forage fish spawning. So far no signs of eggs have been found.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** The Fidalgo Bay Resort has been reserved for August 29<sup>th</sup>. There are no dates in September that will work due to conflicts with other events and facility availability. A task list, timeline and preliminary budget have been drafted. The next step is to meet with the planning committee, assign tasks, create posters, contact participants, and start advertising.

**\*Action Items:**

- *The planning committee will meet in February. Contact Tracy or Kari if you would like to participate*
- *Contact Tracy or Kari with suggestions for hands-on activities*
- *Paul volunteered to help apply for the beach seining permit*
- *Tracy will reserve the Fidalgo Bay Day banner*
- *Kari volunteered to help design the posters*
- *Liz volunteered to help place a "save the date" announcement with the Anacortes Chamber of Commerce and in the Anacortes Community Event Calendar*
- **Olympia Oyster Restoration:** A draft report on the Olympia Oyster restoration work in Fidalgo Bay has been submitted by the Puget Sound Restoration Fund and is currently under review. The project was largely funded by the Skagit MRC Restoration Initiative. Results indicated that good oyster spawning and larval settlement (approximately 50 oysters per square meter) occurred last summer in the four new shell substrate enhancement areas located in eastern Fidalgo Bay. The number of spawning oysters appears to be increasing around the Bay. Julie said that she recently helped Brian tag several oysters in Fidalgo Bay that will be monitored for growth and distribution.
- **Pinto Abalone Restoration:** Working on getting a signed contract with the Puget Sound Restoration Fund. Work will likely begin in the early spring and continue through the summer of 2015. Pinto abalone seeding and monitoring sites are located at Burrows and Allan Islands. In addition, tagged pinto abalone will be monitored at the Shannon Point Marine Center reef.
- **Nearshore Restoration Monitoring:** Volunteers will be trained to monitor beach profiles, take photo points, beach wrack analysis, sediment sampling, vegetation and woody debris, beach seining for nearshore fish use, and forage fish spawning surveys. The Northwest Straits Foundation is developing monitoring plans and protocols for nearshore restoration sites and coordinating the training with other MRCs and volunteer organizations, such as the Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve.
- **Shoreline Landowner Workshop:** The Foundation received grant funding for at least one landowner workshop in Skagit County in addition to the workshop funded through the MRC grant (Puget Sound Partnership funding via the United States Environmental Protection Agency). The workshops will take place in the spring and fall of 2015 and will include classroom and site visits. The Marine and Nearshore grant program is offering a few hours of consultation with a social marketing expert. The Foundation will work closely with the County Planning Department to plan the workshops, provide site visits/consultations to landowners, and provide assistance with project designs and permitting.
- **Sound IQ:** The County intern drafted an inventory of mapping data to be included in the Sound IQ data sharing program. Tracy will look into the possibility of hiring a technical intern with GIS experience to work with Suzanne to collect all of the Skagit MRC data and get it entered into the Sound IQ system.

**\*Action Item:** *Kari volunteered to help draft a list of datasets to be included in Sound IQ.*

## Miscellaneous Events and Announcements

- **“Return of the River”** (about the Elwha dam removal) Thursday, January 8, 7:30pm at the Lincoln Theater in partnership with Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group. Co-director John Gussman will be on hand to introduce the film and take questions after the screening.
- **Friends of Skagit Beaches “Rewilding the Arctic”**: Presented by Dr. Andy Bunn from Western Washington University, on Friday, January 9 from 7:00pm – 8:00pm at the Northwest Educational Services District building in Anacortes.
- **Marine Mammals & Ecosystem Change**: Presented by Aileen Jefferies with the Pacific Biodiversity Institute on Wednesday, January 14 at 7:00pm at the Anacortes Library.
- **Skagit Land Trust Annual Meeting**: Thursday, January 15, 2015, 6:00pm at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort.
- **Storming the Sound**: January 29, 2015 at Maple Hall, La Conner, 9:00am – 4:30pm.
- **The Coastal Volunteer Partnership at Padilla Bay Open House**: January 30 at Padilla Bay at 1pm. The Friends of Skagit Beaches annual meeting will start at 11:30. RSVP Catherine Buchalski [cbuchalski@padillabay.gov](mailto:cbuchalski@padillabay.gov).
- **Job Announcement**: The Swinomish Tribal Community is hiring a full-time permanent Fisheries Technician position to assist the Shellfish Biologist in managing the bait clam fishery. The position announcement closes February 2, 2015. Applications are available online: <http://www.swinomish-nsn.gov/resources/human-resources.aspx>. Applicants should be familiar with Geographic Information Systems (GIS).
- **Oil Spill Workshop**: February 25, at Padilla Bay Research Reserve, 1:00pm – 4:00pm.
- **Salmon Recovery Conference**: May 27-29 in Vancouver WA. The deadline for abstracts is Jan 16<sup>th</sup>.

## MRC Membership Application Review and Recommendation

A closed session was held immediately following the regular MRC meeting, to review and discuss the MRC membership application submitted by Nate Biletnikoff. Nate has over 20 years of experience in environmental management and is currently working for Shell Puget Sound Refinery as the Environmental Team Lead. The Committee unanimously agreed that Nate would be a great addition to the MRC. The consensus of the Committee was to make the recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to appoint Nate Biletnikoff to the Skagit MRC.

**The meeting adjourned at 10:55 a.m. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, February 12, 2015, at the Fidalgo Bay Resort in Anacortes.**



# SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the **February 12, 2015** meeting, held at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort in Anacortes (9:00am to 11:00am)

## Attendees:

- **MRC Members Attending:** Tracy Alker, Morty Cohen, Jay Lind, Todd Woodard (Christine Woodward's Alternate), Liz Lovelett, Kari Odden, Paul Dinnel, Betsy Stevenson, Julie Barber, Jamey Selleck, Nathan Biletnikoff
- **MRC Members Absent:** Teri Switalski, Christine Woodward
- **Others Attending:** Erin Licata, Samish Indian Nation DNR; Pete Haase, citizen; Caroline Gibson, NWSC; Birdie Davenport, WA DNR Aquatic Reserves; Jason Morgan, NWSF; Lisa Kaufman, NWSF; Alex Storvick, WA DNR Aquatic Reserves; Pete Haase, MRC (Morty Cohen's Alternate); Catherine Buchalski, Coastal Volunteer Partnership; Wayne Huseby, Friends of Skagit Beaches; Ivar Dolph, former MRC member

**Call to Order and Introduction:** Jay Lind chaired the meeting which began at 9:05 a.m.

**Approval of Minutes:** The January 8, 2015, MRC meeting minutes were approved as written.

## Public Comments:

- Birdie Davenport reported that the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has offered to pay for an Engineering and Design Cost Estimate for the Fidalgo Bay trestle replacement project in order to help keep it moving forward. The City of Anacortes is the project lead.
- Pete Haase was pleased to announce that the Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve signs are now up. He thanked the State DNR for providing the signs.

## Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Report, Kari Odden:

NWSC meeting, January 30, 2015 in Coupeville (10am – 3:00pm)

- **MRC Forum:** Representatives from the NWSC and MRCs will be meeting with the Coastal MRC and legislators in Olympia on February 23<sup>rd</sup> from 12:00pm to 3:00pm. The purpose of the meeting is to identify common priorities and challenges and raising these issues with key legislators.
- **MRC Presentation to Commissioners:** NWSC staff and the External Relations Committee will work with the MRCs to help communicate the work of the MRCs to the local elected officials.  
*\*Action Item: MRCs must develop a communications plan. Jay, Kari, and Tracy will provide an update to the Board of County Commissioners sometime in March.*
- **Request for Proposals:** The NWSC Request for Proposals for the 2015-2016 MRC Grant will be issued on March 16 for a one year grant period. The budget will likely be around the same amount. The Science Advisory Committee has reconvened and will be part of the technical review process for the new MRC project proposals.  
*\*Action Item: MRCs will present at least one project proposal at the May 29<sup>th</sup> NWSC Meeting. Project proposals are due June 1<sup>st</sup>!*
- **NWSC Strategic Plan Additions Adopted**  
*\*Action Item: MRC members are encouraged to review the Plan on a regular basis and develop future projects that will help reach the four environmental goals.*
- **Rockfish Recovery Planning:** Dan Tonnes, a Marine Biologist with NOAA provided an update on Rockfish Recovery Planning. The Recovery Plan will be available for public comment soon.  
*\*Action Item: Invite Dan to give a presentation on the Rockfish Recovery Plan at a future MRC meeting.*
- **Next NWSC Meeting:** February 27, 2015. WebEx conference call.
- **NWSC Retreat:** March 12-13, 2015 at Padilla Bay.

## Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) Report, Jay Lind:

NWSF meeting, January 16<sup>th</sup> in Mukilteo:

- **NWSF Funding Status:** Most funding coming into the Foundation is restricted funding for specific projects. More unrestricted funds are needed to cover overhead costs. The Board will need to start focusing more on fundraising strategies.
- **NWSF Executive Director Status:** The search for a new Executive Director has been put on hold for now to focus on fundraising. Joan will continue as the Interim Executive Director.



- **NWSF Liaisons:** The Foundation has assigned a liaison for each of the MRCs. Lisa Kaufman has been assigned as the Foundation's liaison to the Skagit MRC.
- **Crab Pot Study at the NOAA Facility in Mukilteo:** Over 12,000 crab pots are lost in Puget Sound each year. The NWSF received funding to study several different crab pot designs to determine which ones offer the best potential to improve crab escapement rates. The study was conducted at the NOAA facility in Mukilteo where they also maintain a pinto abalone hatchery. One simple solution revealed in the study involves using a bungee cord to make the crab pot lid open if the escape cord breaks. Additional follow-up studies will be conducted for a more in-depth data analysis. A report will be published after the in-depth analysis is complete.

### Administrative Report, Tracy Alker:

- Administrative updates were sent to the MRC electronically before the meeting. Nothing new to report.

### Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERRS) Report, Presented by Sharon Riggs

The [Padilla Bay NERRS \(www.padillabay.gov\)](http://www.padillabay.gov), established by the Federal Government in 1980, is one of 28 [NERRS \(www.nerrs.noaa.gov\)](http://www.nerrs.noaa.gov), founded in the United States and Puerto Rico. The purpose of the NERRS is to protect natural resources, provide opportunities for long-term research, education, and interpretation about estuaries, address coastal management issue through research, improve understanding and management of estuaries, and is a mechanism to provide information to government entities and other organizations involved in addressing coastal management issues. Padilla Bay NERRS is currently in the process of updating their five year management plan. Sharon is seeking input from natural resources stakeholders.

*\*Action Item: Contact Sharon at [sriggs@padillabay.gov](mailto:sriggs@padillabay.gov) if you would like to participate in updating Padilla Bay NERRs Five Year Management Plan.*

The programs at Padilla Bay NERRS include Research and Monitoring, Education and Outreach, and Stewardship

- **Research and Monitoring:** Padilla Bay NERRS has a System-Wide Monitoring Program that focuses on monitoring water quality, weather, and eelgrass. Padilla Bay NERRS offers research assistantships, but anyone who wants to do research at Padilla Bay can do so by contacting the Research Coordinator. Jude Apple ([japple@padillabay.gov](mailto:japple@padillabay.gov)) was recently appointed as the new Research Coordinator.
- **Education and Outreach:** Padilla Bay NERRS offers community and public education programs for people of all ages from pre-K to adults. They also offer classes for planners and consultants through their Coastal Training Program and provide special educational workshops for teachers.
- **Stewardship:** The Stewardship program at Padilla Bay NERRS focuses on protecting and sustaining the natural resources within the reserve, and making sure a functioning healthy estuarine ecosystem is maintained. The Padilla Bay NERR staff participates on various workgroups and committees and with natural resources stakeholders to improve communications, identify coastal management issues, research needs, educational needs, and management needs of the NERRS.
- **Coastal Volunteer Partnership:** The Coastal Volunteer Partnership is a new program at Padilla Bay that was established to coordinate and train volunteers to support the various programs at Padilla Bay as well as partner organizations including the Skagit MRC. Catherine Buchalski was hired as the Volunteer Programs Coordinator.
- **Funding and Support:** Padilla Bay NERRS is owned by the State and managed by the Washington State Department of Ecology under the [Shorelands Program](#). 70% of the annual funding to support the programs at Padilla Bay comes from the National Oceanic Atmospheric Association's (NOAA) Coastal Zone Management fund and 30% comes from the State general fund administered by the Washington State Department of Ecology. The Padilla Bay Foundation is a nonprofit organization that was established to help support programs at Padilla Bay NERRS. The Foundation raises money through donations, memberships, and grants. New members are always welcome.
- **NERRS Science Collaborative:** The NERRS Science Collaborative Request For Proposals (RFP) was recently released on January 21. The RFP is for projects or integrated assessments that involve a collaboration of multiple stakeholders. The Pre-proposals are due on February 27. The grant is for up to \$250k/year for a period of 1-3 years. Science Transfer projects involve bringing in a specific project that is happening somewhere else. The funding can be used as a way to bring the scientists in to share their knowledge of the project. Pre-Proposals are due March 27.

## Forage Fish and Kelp Monitoring Opportunities, Caroline Gibson

Caroline is the Marine Program Manager for the [Northwest Straits Commission](http://www.nwstraits.org) ([www.nwstraits.org](http://www.nwstraits.org)) where she manages regional projects such as forage fish and kelp monitoring, provides technical support to the MRCs, and serves on several state advisory committees.

- **Forage Fish Monitoring:** Legislators have recognized the significance of forage fish in the recovery of Puget Sound and recently introduced new legislation which would direct Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) to do a comprehensive survey of all suitable forage fish spawning habitat in Washington State. Funding for this state-wide effort will likely become available this year. Caroline is currently working with WDFW to develop a monitoring plan for the Northwest Straits region. The NWSC has plenty of monitoring equipment available for the MRCs to use to help with this effort. The NWSC will be offering forage fish survey training in Skagit County sometime in April for up to twelve MRC members. Training will most likely take place at Padilla Bay. Jason Morgan added that the Northwest Straits Foundations is also working with WDFW to provide forage fish survey training for volunteers at Bowman Bay this year. Advanced egg identification training will also be offered to MRC members and other volunteers who have already completed the survey training. Egg identification is very difficult and will require some oversight and Quality Assurance Quality Control (QAQC). Right now there are only a small handful of people who are qualified to do QAQC at WDFW and the State DNR. Surveys will also require a lead like Pete Haase who has had a lot of training and experience to make sure the surveys are being done correctly.

*\* Action Item: MRC members will need to decide whether or not to include forage fish monitoring in the upcoming grant proposals and 2015-2016 Work Plan. Who will be the Project Lead?*

- **Kelp and Plankton Monitoring:** There is currently a data gap in documented changes of floating kelp beds and sub-tidal kelp species. The Salish Sea International Kelp Alliance was established last year by the NWSC and several other stakeholders to advance the use of citizen science in monitoring kelp. National Oceanic Atmospheric Association (NOAA) Hollings Scholar Emily Bishop, developed kayak-based protocol last year for monitoring changes in floating kelp beds. The protocol is available on the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative's (NWSI) website [www.nwstraits.org](http://www.nwstraits.org). Caroline is looking for at least five MRCs to the lead in kayak-based monitoring. The Hole in the Wall Kayak Club in Anacortes could be a great resource for the Skagit MRC to recruit volunteer kayakers to help with the monitoring. MRCs will need to select at least two or three kelp beds to monitor once a month during the high growing season in July, August, and September. A volunteer pilot from Island County has offered to take panoramic images and georeferencing floating kelp beds to help identify good monitoring locations. There is also sound-wide emphasis on the collection of plankton data right now. Researchers are interested in looking to see if there is a potential correlation between kelp and plankton. They are also interested in looking at rockfish and sandlance larvae data collected in the plankton samples. Caroline encouraged the MRCs to help fill this data gap by collecting plankton samples while monitoring kelp. There are small plankton nets that can be used to collect samples from a kayak.

*\*Action Item: MRC members will need to decide whether or not to include kelp and plankton monitoring in the upcoming grant proposals and 2015-2016 Work Plan. Who will be the Project Lead?*

- **Ocean Acidification Forum:** Caroline would like to partner with Skagit MRC to hold another Ocean Acidification Forum in Skagit County in April or May this year. Ideally it would take place in the evening on the same day as an MRC meeting to increase participation of MRC members.

*\*Action Item: MRC members will need to decide on the date, location, and time to hold the Ocean Acidification Forum. Should it be in Anacortes or Mount Vernon? Who is the intended audience?*

## Project Status & Discussion

- **Salish Sea Stewards/Beach Naturalists, Catherine Buchalski/Morty Cohen:** Applications are now being accepted for the 2015 Salish Sea Stewards volunteer training. So far 15 volunteers have signed up. The training will consist of 30 hours of classroom presentations and 10 hours of field training. Classroom sessions will be held Thursday afternoons at Padilla Bay Reserve starting March 5th through April 30<sup>th</sup> from 3:00pm – 6:00pm. Field trainings will be offered at varying times and locations. The application and schedule are available on Skagit MRC's website: [www.skagitmrc.org](http://www.skagitmrc.org). The training program will be administered under Padilla Bay's new volunteer program called the Coastal Volunteer Partnership. The Coastal Volunteer Partnership will serve as an administrative umbrella for several partners who have similar goals and needs for volunteers including the Skagit MRC, Friends of Skagit Beaches, the Skagit County Clean Water program, the Padilla Bay Foundation, and the Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve.

- **Shannon Point Nearshore Restoration, Lisa Kaufman/Paul Dinne!** The City of Anacortes and Western Washington University are currently under negotiations regarding the potential trail. It is anticipated that we will be able to start moving forward with the project again soon and the new design will be finalized in July. The funding that Washington State Department of Natural Resources provided for construction will be redirected to pay for the final redesign and permitting. Paul pointed out that Pete Haase and other volunteers have been out at the site conducting pre-construction forage fish surveys. Although spawning has been documented on neighboring properties, no signs of spawning have been observed at the project site.
- **Bowman Bay Nearshore Restoration, Lisa Kaufman/Jay Lind:** The permitting process for the riprap removal at Bowman Bay is underway. As it turns out, a permit will not be required from the County for the riprap removal. We are still waiting to find out whether or not a permit will be required from the US Army Corps of Engineers. If no federal permit is required than State Parks will become the lead for the cultural resources assessment. The bidding processes will start as soon as all of the permits are in place which likely be the end of March. State Parks will most likely keep some of the rock and a nearby source might be interested in taking the rest. Construction is anticipated to begin in September, 2015. The Marine Nearshore Grant program funding will be used pay for construction. The Skagit MRC grant is providing funding for the permitting, final design, and plants. The Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group completed the planting design and will do all of the planting after construction. The Foundation was recently awarded a \$15,000 education and outreach grant at selected shoreline restoration sites, including Bowman Bay. The proposal includes interpretive signage, a special event/signage unveiling, low-tide beach walks, website development, a video, and volunteer planting parties. Volunteers continue to monitor the beach for forage fish spawning. So far no signs of eggs have been found. There are a group of students at Western Washington University who are learning how to do Environmental Impact Statements and Environmental Assessments and would like to do one for the Bowman Bay project site. They will be meeting with Lisa next week to talk about the project.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day, Kari Odden:** The Fidalgo Bay Resort has been reserved for August 29<sup>th</sup>. The event will take place a little earlier than previous years. Unfortunately, there are no dates in September that will work due to conflicts with other larger events and facility availability. Save the Date notices will be sent out to participants soon to notify them of the new date. Pre-event task assignments, a timeline and preliminary budget have been established. Future planning meetings will be held Mondays at Padilla Bay.

*\*Action Item: The planning committee will meet again in April at Padilla Bay. Contact Tracy or Kari if you would like to participate.*

- **Olympia Oyster Restoration, Paul Dinne!** The Puget Sound Restoration Fund is finalizing the 2014 report on Olympia oyster restoration work in Fidalgo Bay. The project was largely funded by the Skagit MRC Restoration Initiative. Preliminary results indicate that substantial new oyster spawning and larval settlement occurred last summer in the four new shell substrate enhancement areas located in eastern Fidalgo Bay. Approximately 50 oysters per square meter. The highest recruitment occurred just south of the plot closest to the trestle. Results indicate that most of the natural oyster larval recruitment is occurring around the trestle. The number of spawning oysters appears to be increasing around the Bay. Monitoring will begin again in May 2015. Paul is also working with the Port of Anacortes to plant new Olympia oyster seed at Cap Sante Marina at Seafarers Park area in 2015 to expand the distribution of native oysters.
- **Pinto Abalone Restoration, Paul Dinne!** Contracted with the Puget Sound Restoration Fund to monitor pinto abalone and plant additional seed at the four plots at Burrows and Allan in Skagit County. Some of the pinto abalone seed will also be planted at Cypress Island. In addition, tagged pinto abalone will be monitored at the Shannon Point Marine Center reef. Preliminary monitoring results indicate that the abalone numbers have doubled at the Burrows and Allan Island locations and are spreading beyond the four plots where they were originally placed. Work will likely begin in the early spring and continue through the summer of 2015. Paul plans to reach out to the San Juan MRC in hopes to expand the pinto abalone restoration work to the San Juan area.
- **Nearshore Restoration Monitoring, Lisa Kaufman/Jason Morgan:** Volunteers will be trained on beach seining to monitor nearshore fish use on February 13<sup>th</sup> at Cornet Bay in Island County. This training is part of a collaborative effort between the Northwest Straits Foundation, NOAA and the MRCs in Island, Whatcom, and Skagit Counties. Monitoring plans and protocols for nearshore restoration sites are currently being drafted and planning is underway for volunteer training on beach profile surveys and



establishing photo points, forage fish spawning surveys, intertidal monitoring, as well as surveying beach wrack, vegetation, and woody debris.

- **Shoreline Landowner Workshop, Betsy Stevenson:** Skagit MRC and the Northwest Straits Foundation are sponsoring a Shoreline Landowner Workshop that will be held on **Saturday, March 14** at the Fidalgo Bay Resort in Anacortes from 10:00am to 3:00pm. Landowners will learn about coastal processes, impacts of shoreline armoring, how to protect their property from erosion and alternatives to hard armoring. Participants can also apply for a free technical site visit from qualified professionals.

*\*Action Item: Skagit MRC members were asked to contact Betsy or Tracy if there are any specific shoreline properties or areas that would benefit from this workshop to make sure they get invited.*

- **Sound IQ, Betsy Stevenson:** Suzanne Shull is helping with the Geographical Information Systems (GIS) work for Sound IQ. Suzanne requested input and approval from the MRC regarding some of the datasets, particularly how the selection basins were divided up for the Skagit County marine waters. Betsy will forward the information the MRC members if interested. The County intern will work with Betsy, Tracy, and Suzanne to collect all of the Skagit MRC data and get it entered into the Sound IQ system.

*\*Action Item: Skagit MRC members will review and confirm the selection basins that Suzanne has proposed or identify what edits are needed.*

## **Project Proposal Discussion**

- **Project Proposal Timeline:** The NWSC Request for Proposals for the 2015-2016 MRC Grant will be issued on March 16 for a one year grant period (October 1, 2015 – September 30, 2015). The project proposal deadline is June 1. The MRCs will be asked to present at least one project proposal at the May 29<sup>th</sup> NWSC meeting.
- **Project Proposal Discussion:** The Committee discussed the process for developing and prioritizing project proposals. MRC members were encouraged to refer to the MRC's Five Year Strategic Plan, Past MRC Work Plans, the NWSC Strategic Plan, and the Puget Sound Partnership's Action Agenda for identifying and prioritizing projects. What are the MRC's ongoing projects and where are the data gaps? The Request for Proposals will also provide guidelines for developing project proposals. All projects must have a project lead. The project lead will be responsible for developing the project proposal and cost estimates, providing project updates, and making sure the grant deliverables are completed and submitted on time. Jay Lind, Paul Dinnel, Jamey Selleck, and Tracy Alker volunteered to form a subcommittee that will be responsible for reviewing and prioritizing projects for the 2015-2016 MRC Work Plan and providing recommendations to the rest of the MRC.

*\*Action Item 1: Skagit MRC members will send project ideas and proposals to Tracy to incorporate into a spreadsheet for review and prioritization.*

*\*Action Item 2: Future potential project in 2016: Test for heavy metals in the stormwater entering and exiting the new rain gardens.*

*\*Action Item 3: Invite the Island County MRC to give a presentation on their phytoremediation project.*

## **Miscellaneous Events and Announcements**

- It is with great sadness to share the news that former MRC member Ric Boge recently lost his battle with cancer. Ric was a dear friend and dedicated environmental steward who volunteered countless hours protecting and restoring our marine resources. Ric really cared about our local community and worked hard making a difference. He will be greatly missed.
- **Padilla Bay Watershed Residents Workshop:** Saturday, February 21<sup>st</sup> at the Padilla Bay Research Reserve 9:00AM – 2:30PM. Topics will focus on water quality and what homeowners can do to help protect the waters of Puget Sound.
- **Oil Spill Workshop:** February 25, at Padilla Bay Research Reserve, 1:00pm – 4:00pm. Don't forget to RSVP Heidi Lehman at lehman@nwstraits.org.

**The meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m. The Skagit Restoration Initiative subcommittee meeting was held following the regular MRC meeting. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, March 12, 2015, at the Skagit County Administration Building in Mount Vernon.**



# SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the **March 12, 2015** meeting, held at the Skagit County Administration Building (9:00am to 11:00am)

## Attendees:

- **MRC Members Attending:** Tracy Alker, Morty Cohen, Jay Lind, Christine Woodward, Kari Odden, Paul Dinnel, Jamey Selleck, Aundrea McBride (Julie Barber's Alternate)
- **MRC Members Absent:** Teri Switalski, Nathan Biletnikoff, Liz Lovelett, Betsy Stevenson, Julie Barber
- **Others Attending:** Todd Woodard, Samish Indian Nation DNR; Jason Morgan, NWSF; Lisa Kaufman, NWSF

**Call to Order and Introduction:** Jay Lind chaired the meeting which began at 9:05 a.m.

**Approval of Minutes:** The February 12, 2015, MRC meeting minutes were approved as written.

**Public Comments:** No Public Comment

## Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Report, Christine Woodward:

*NWSC meeting, February 27, 2015 WebEx Conference Call*

- **NWSC Retreat:** March 12-13, 2015 at Padilla Bay. Jay was asked to present a signature MRC project that supports each of the four environmental goals in the Initiative's Strategic Plan. Jay decided to give a presentation that focuses on Skagit MRC's work in Fidalgo Bay.
- **Request for Proposals:** The NWSC Request for Proposals for the 2015-2016 MRC Grant will be issued on March 16 for a one year grant period (October 1, 2015 – September 31, 2015). The budget will likely be around \$73,000 again. The Science Advisory Committee will be part of the technical review process for the new MRC project proposals. Project proposals are due May 31<sup>st</sup>.  
*\*Action Item: MRCs will present at least one project proposal at the May 29<sup>th</sup> NWSC Meeting.*
- **Training for MRC Chairs:** Ginny provided new MRC Chairs with useful information about how to be an effective Chair.
- **2015 MRC Conference:** Started brainstorming dates and venues for the 2015 MRC Conference.
- **Rain Gardens Presentation:** Bob Simmons with WSU Extension presented on the benefits of rain gardens and how they function.
- **New NWSC Representative:** Christine pointed out that Skagit MRC will need to elect a new NWSC representative to replace her at the next MRC meeting in April.
- **Next NWSC Meeting:** April 24<sup>th</sup>, WebEx conference call.

## Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) Report, Jay Lind:

- **MRC Forum:** Representatives from the NWSC, NWSF, and MRCs met with the Coastal MRC and legislators in Olympia on February 23<sup>rd</sup> from 12:00pm to 3:00pm. The purpose of the meeting was to identify common priorities and challenges and raise these issues with key legislators using a collective voice. Senators Kevin Ranker and Christine Rolfes attended as well as Representatives Brian Blake and Dean Takko. The legislators were very supportive of our work. The four coastal county MRCs are state funded and administered under the WA Department of Fish and Wildlife. They have to work on a much tighter budget than the Northwest Straits MRCs and only have one part-time coordinator. Jay pointed out that we are really lucky to have the coordination and support of the NWSC and the NWSF staff. The Coastal MRC invited the NWSC and the County MRCs to their annual conference and seafood feast this year. Tracy emailed the MRC Forum summary to MRC members and shared a hard copy of the 2014 Coastal MRC Report to the Legislature.  
*\*Action Item: Tracy will send an electronic copy of the 2014 Coastal MRC Report to the Legislature to the MRC members.*
- **Derelict Crab Pot Removal in Fidalgo Bay:** Jay is working with Joan to seek funding for removing derelict crab pots in Fidalgo Bay.
- **NWSF Executive Director Status:** The NWSF Board is exploring the possibility of going through a headhunter to fill the Executive Director position. Joan will continue as the Interim Executive Director.

- It is with great Sadness to share the news that Robyn DuPre recently passed away after fighting a long hard battle with cancer. Robyn served as the former Executive Director of the Northwest Straits Foundation. She was a good friend, a strong leader, an outdoor enthusiast, and a dedicated environmental advocate. Robyn will be greatly missed.

### Administrative Report, Tracy Alker:

- **Quarterly Grant Progress Reports:** MRC volunteer hours and project reports for the period of January – March are due April 16<sup>th</sup>  
*\*Action Item: Tracy will send quarterly volunteer hour report forms to MRC members. MRC members will submit volunteer hours by April 9th.*
- **Oil Spill Workshop:** The NWSF and Skagit MRC co-hosted an oil spill workshop at Padilla Bay on February 25<sup>th</sup>. There were close to 20 participants including emergency management representatives from the Coast Guard, State, County, City, tribes, oil refineries, as well as representatives from Burlington Northern Railroad. The workshop was very successful and spurred a lot of really great discussion.

### Samish Indian Nation Beach Cleanup Project, Presented by Todd Woodard

The Washington State Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) is leading the effort to remove creosote-treated marine debris throughout Puget Sound. Creosote is comprised of more than 300 chemicals that can be toxic to marine life. In 2014, the Samish Indian Nation partnered with the WDNR to remove creosote treated logs, styrofoam, and other marine debris from beaches in our region with help from the Washington Conservation Corps (WCC) and Veteran Conservation Corps (VCC). The second part of this project involves derelict crab pot removal with the WA Aquatic Lands Investigative Submarine (WALIS). WALIS is equipped with side scan sonar to locate crab pots in shallow water and a hook to help retrieve the pots. The project area stretches from the North Fork of the Skagit River up to the San Juan Archipelago. Most of the work focuses on state owned lands, but they also remove creosote from private lands.

2014 was the first year of this three year funded project. The Washington State Department of Ecology is providing funding for the WCC and VCC crews, and the Samish Indian Nation is providing the 22 foot boat and staff with funding from the US Environmental Protection Agency through the Puget Sound Partnership. Samish's small boat allows for access to pocket beaches and other places that are hard to reach by foot or larger vessels. The work is physically demanding and the crews work long hard days. All of the material that is collected is sorted for recycling or disposal. Some of the large creosote logs have to be cut into smaller pieces with a hand saw to fit into the boat and the sawdust is captured for proper disposal. A total of 117,150 lbs (360 cubic yards) of marine debris was removed over a nine week period in 2014 which far exceeded the goal of removing 40,000 lbs.

This year the cleanup effort will be expanded to new beaches that they couldn't get to in 2014. In addition, they hope to revisit some of the same beaches cleaned up last year to identify those areas that tend to accumulate debris more frequently like the south shore of the San Juans.

### Nearshore Monitoring, Jason Morgan

Jason Morgan, the Nearshore Restoration Program Intern for the Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF), is developing monitoring plans and protocols for Skagit MRC's nearshore restoration sites using [The Shoreline Monitoring Toolbox](#) as a reference. The Toolbox includes a decision tree to help guide what parameters to monitor, protocols for different types of monitoring, data management strategies, and cost estimates. Monitoring sites in Skagit County include Bowman Bay, Shannon Point, NW March's Point and various other locations in Fidalgo Bay. There are very few opportunities for monitoring on the March's Point side of Fidalgo Bay due to limited access and thick muck. The purpose for monitoring is to measure the benefits of the nearshore restoration work and evaluate whether or not the project goals have been reached as compared to the nearby reference sites. In addition, baseline data will be collected to evaluate the status and trends in Fidalgo Bay. Monitoring parameters will be site specific but could include beach seining, beach profiles, establishing photo points, forage fish spawning surveys, intertidal monitoring, sediment characteristics, beach wrack, surface epifauna and algae, large woody debris, and insect fallout. The data collected will be analyzed and shared with partner organizations.

Training will be offered to volunteers for the different monitoring parameters. Close to 50 volunteers recently received training for beach seining on February 13<sup>th</sup> at Cornet Bay in Island County. The Samish Indian Nation is leading the beach seining effort in Fidalgo Bay and is seeking volunteers to help. The NWSF is working in collaboration with WDFW and Deception Pass State Park to provide a forage fish survey training workshop at Bowman Bay for volunteers. Forage fish survey training will also be offered to MRC members this spring through

the NWSF and WDFW. The NWSF is also working in collaboration with RE-Sources, the Coastal Volunteer Partnership, and the Friends of Skagit Beaches Trail Tales to offer intertidal monitoring training to volunteers in April. The Trail Tales program is taking the lead in conducting intertidal monitoring at the Custom Plywood Site in coordination with the WA Department of Ecology and Hart Crowser.

*\*Action Item: Invite Betty Carteret to give an update of the Friends of Skagit Trail Tales program regarding their intertidal monitoring component.*

## **Project Status & Discussion**

- **Salish Sea Stewards/Beach Naturalists, Morty Cohen:** 26 very enthusiastic volunteers signed up for the training which began on March 5<sup>th</sup> and will continue through April 30<sup>th</sup>. Rachel Benbrook gave a Puget Sound 101 presentation and Morty presented on the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative and the work of the Skagit MRC. Classroom sessions are held Thursday afternoons at Padilla Bay Reserve from 3:00pm – 6:00pm and are open to the public. Field trainings will be offered at varying times and locations.
- **Shannon Point Nearshore Restoration, Lisa Kaufman:** The City of Anacortes and Western Washington University are currently under negotiations regarding the potential trail. It is anticipated that the new project design for the riprap removal will be finalized in July. The Washington State Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) is in the process of amending the grant to redirect the funding that was to be provided for construction to pay for the final redesign and permitting. The Foundation is also in the process of amending the contract with Coastal Geologic Services. Pete Haase and other volunteers have been out at the site conducting pre-construction forage fish surveys. Although spawning has been documented on neighboring properties, no signs of spawning have been observed at the project site.
- **Bowman Bay Nearshore Restoration, Jay Lind:** The permitting process for the riprap removal at Bowman Bay is underway. A permit will not be required from the County or the US Army Corps of Engineers for the riprap removal. It is anticipated that the Hydraulic Project Approval will be received in about one week. State Parks will be the lead for the cultural resources assessment. The bidding processes will start as soon as all of the permits are in place which likely be in May. State Parks will most likely keep some of the rock and a nearby source might be interested in taking the rest. Construction is anticipated to begin in September, 2015. The Marine Nearshore Grant program funding will be used pay for construction. The Skagit MRC grant is providing funding for the permitting, final design, and plants. The Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group completed the planting design and will do all of the planting after construction. Volunteers continue to monitor the beach for forage fish spawning. So far no signs of eggs have been found.

*\*Action Item: Skagit MRC will look into a potential future project to reconnect the wetland to the bay and partnering with the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group.*

- **Fidalgo Bay Day, Kari Odden:** The Fidalgo Bay Resort has been reserved for August 29<sup>th</sup>. Catherine created the 'Save the Date' poster which will be sent out to the participants. Pre-event task assignments, a timeline and preliminary budget have been established. Wayne Husbey found out that the Shannon Point Marine Center will be able to bring their portable aquariums, thanks to Mira Lutz. The students might not be available to help so we will need to recruit volunteers. It was suggested that Fidalgo Bay Day needs branding, a logo and format that people will recognize. Branding development could be a good project for a volunteer.

*\*Action Item: The planning committee will meet again in April at Padilla Bay. Contact Tracy or Kari if you would like to participate.*

*\*Action Item: A new Project Lead is needed for 2016 Fidalgo Bay Day*

- **Olympia Oyster Restoration, Paul Dinne!** The Puget Sound Restoration Fund is finalizing the 2014 report on Olympia oyster restoration work in Fidalgo Bay. The project was largely funded by the Skagit MRC Restoration Initiative. Routine monitoring will begin again in April or May 2015 with the help of volunteers. Paul will apply for a Joint Aquatic Resource Permit Application (JARPA) after getting approval from the Port of Anacortes to deploy oyster shell and Olympia oyster seed at Cap Sante Marina Seafarers Park area.
- **Pinto Abalone Restoration, Paul Dinne!** Paul shared photos of the recent of pinto abalone outplanting that took place in early March as part of a collaborative effort with the Puget Sound Restoration Fund, WDFW, and Shannon Point Marine Center. Approximately 2,000 pinto abalone seed were planted at the four established locations at Burrows and Allan Islands, and two new locations at Cypress Island. Preliminary monitoring results indicate that the abalone are growing larger in size and density with their numbers doubling and spreading beyond the four original plots at Burrows and Allan Islands. Monitoring

the abalone for survival, growth, and signs of natural recruitment will continue through the spring and summer months.

- **Shoreline Landowner Workshop, Jay Lind:** Skagit MRC and the Northwest Straits Foundation are sponsoring a Shoreline Landowner Workshop that will be held on **Saturday, March 14** at the Fidalgo Bay Resort in Anacortes from 10:00am to 3:00pm. So far 25 households have registered for the workshop. Jay will provide the welcome to participants on behalf of the Skagit MRC and Foundation. Betsy will set up the Skagit MRC display. The workshop will be taught by Jim Johanssen of Coastal Geologic Services. Landowners will learn about coastal processes, impacts of shoreline armoring, how to protect their property from erosion and alternatives to hard armoring. Participants can also apply for a free technical site visit from qualified professionals.
- **Sound IQ, Tracy Alker:** The County recently hired a new intern, Jason Quigley, who will be helping to collect mapping information for Sound IQ.

### Project Proposal Discussion

- **Project Proposal Timeline:** The NWSC Request for Proposals for the 2015-2016 MRC Grant will be issued on March 16 for a one year grant period (October 1, 2015 – September 30, 2015). The project proposal deadline is May 31. The MRCs will be asked to present at least one project proposal at the May 29<sup>th</sup> NWSC meeting.
- **Project Proposal Discussion:** The Committee discussed project ideas and cost estimates. Jay Lind, Paul Dinnel, Jamey Selleck, and Tracy Alker will review project proposals for the 2015-2016 MRC grant and provide recommendations at the May 14<sup>th</sup> MRC meeting. Draft project proposals and cost estimates will need to be ready to go by the April 9<sup>th</sup> MRC meeting.

*\*Action Item 1: Skagit MRC members will send project proposals to Tracy to incorporate into a spreadsheet for the Project Review Subcommittee to review following the April 9 MRC Meeting. Proposals must be finalized and approved by the May 14<sup>th</sup> MRC meeting.*

### **Miscellaneous Events and Announcements**

- **Shoreline Landowner Workshop:** Saturday, March 14 at the Fidalgo Bay Resort 10:00AM – 3:00PM. Topics will focus on water quality and what homeowners can do to help protect the waters of Puget Sound.

**The meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, April 9, 2015, at the Fidalgo Bay Resort, Anacortes.**





# SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the **April 9, 2015** meeting, held at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort (9:00am to 11:00am)

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## Attendees:

- **MRC Members Attending:** Tracy Alker, Morty Cohen, Jay Lind, Kari Odden, Paul Dinnel, Jamey Selleck, Julie Barber, Todd Woodard (Christine Woodward's alternate), Liz Lovelett, Betsy Stevenson
- **MRC Members Absent:** Teri Switalski, Nathan Biletnikoff, Christine Woodward
- **Others Attending:** Jason Morgan, NWSF; Lisa Kaufman, NWSF; Pete Haase (Morty Cohen's MRC Alternate); Catherine Buchalski, CVP Coordinator; Sasha Horst, NWSC

**Call to Order and Introduction:** Jay Lind chaired the meeting which began at 9:05 a.m.

**Approval of Minutes:** The March 12, 2015, MRC meeting minutes were approved as written.

**Public Comments:** Catherine Buchalski encouraged the Skagit MRC to become more actively involved in the Puget Sound Partnership's ECO Net program. ECO Net stands for Education, Communication, and Outreach Network. ECO Net provides grant opportunities, professional development and skills training, connections to regional media campaigns. ECO Net members working together to develop joint messaging, sharing resources, and knowledge, and coordinating efforts to leverage and strengthen local programs have a greater community impact than individual organizations.

## Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Report, Jay Lind:

*NWSC meeting, March 12-13, 2015 NWSC Retreat at Padilla Bay*

- **NWSC Retreat:** Both Christine and Jay attended the retreat. The primary focus of the retreat was to review the NWSC Strategic Plan and turning it into action to meet the goals.
- **2015-2016 MRC Grant Proposals:** The budget will likely be around \$70,000. MRCs will select at least one project proposal to present at the May 29<sup>th</sup> NWSC meeting. Project proposals are due May 31<sup>st</sup>.
- **Next NWSC Meeting:** April 24<sup>th</sup>, WebEx Conference Call.

## Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) Report, Jay Lind:

- **NWSF Executive Director:** It was decided not to go through a headhunter to help fill the Executive Director position. The job announcement has been posted.
- **Derelict Crab Pot Removal/Crabber Outreach:** Jay is working with NWSF to seek funding to remove derelict crab pots from Fidalgo Bay and to conduct crabber outreach. Jay also plans to approach Puget Sound Anglers for funding. Pete Haase suggested contacting the Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve Citizens for a letter of support for the project.

## NWSC Representative Election

The Committee discussed electing a new NWSC Representative to replace Christine Woodward when her term expires in May. Jamey Selleck expressed interest, but said his work schedule will not allow him to attend the meetings during the summer months. Unfortunately, Kari Odden will not be available to fill in for him as the NWSC Alternate during the summer months. Jay and Paul said they could try to fill in as needed. The Committee decided to postpone the final decision until the next MRC meeting in May.

## Administrative Report, Tracy Alker:

- **Quarterly Grant Progress Reports- Due April 16th:** Tracy thanked MRC members for submitting their volunteer hours and project reports.
- **Oil Spill Safety Forum:** MRC member Liz Lovelett is working on a comprehensive oil spill safety forum that will be held at the City of Anacortes Council Chambers. Citizens will have the opportunity to ask questions and leave written testimony. It will likely be held in the evening on May 6<sup>th</sup>. Liz is currently waiting to get a confirmation from Congressman Rick Larsen and hopes to have emergency personnel from the City, Shell, Tesoro, the Port, etc.

- **Free Presentation Skills Training for MRC Members:** June 4 and June 18, at Padilla Bay from 9:00am – 4:00pm. To register, contact Holly Faulstich: [faulstich@nwstraits.org](mailto:faulstich@nwstraits.org) by May 1.
- **Forage Fish Training for MRC Members:** May 7<sup>th</sup> at Padilla Bay from 10:00am to 3:00pm. The training location might be moved to the Fidalgo RV Resort because there will likely be more opportunities to find fish eggs. There is still room for 9-10 more people. If no other MRC members are interested we can open it up to volunteers like the Salish Sea Stewards if they are willing commit to surveying MRC project sites.
- **MRC Communications Plan:** The NWSC requires a Communication Plan from each of the MRCs as a grant deliverable requirement. Tracy will be seeking input from MRC members.
- **Ocean Acidification Workshop:** Tracy is working with Caroline to get something scheduled this spring or summer. Different locations are currently being considered including the Northwest Educational District Building in Anacortes and the Padilla Bay Research Reserve facility. Please contact Tracy or Caroline if you have any suggestions for panel speakers who could provide local insight.

## Project Status & Discussion

- **Salish Sea Stewards/Beach Naturalists, Morty Cohen/Catherine Buchalski:** Training is going really well. There are 25 very enthusiastic volunteers who signed up to take the training which began on March 5<sup>th</sup> and will continue through April 30<sup>th</sup>. The participants range in age from 24-70, and represent five cities in Skagit County (Anacortes, Bow, Burlington, Concrete, Mount Vernon), and one city in Whatcom County (Bellingham). The core training program is 40 hours with 30 hours of classroom sessions, and 10 hours of field training. The classroom sessions are held Thursday afternoons at Padilla Bay Reserve from 3:00pm – 6:00pm and are open to the public. The field trainings are being offered at varying times and locations. Many of the new volunteers have already started helping with forage fish surveys and beach seining. A five hour Beach Naturalist refresher training will also be offered to volunteers on May 7. It will cover tide pool ecology, coastal process and environmental interpretation for school groups and the general public. The Salish Sea Stewards/Beach Naturalists training program is being administered under Padilla Bay's new volunteer program called the Coastal Volunteer Partnership (CVP) (<http://www.padillabay.gov/involvevolunteer.asp>).
- **Shannon Point Nearshore Restoration, Paul Dinnel/Lisa Kaufman:** The City of Anacortes and Western Washington University are still under negotiations regarding the potential trail. The contract with Coastal Geologic Services is in the process of being amended to do the redesign. CGS and the wetland biologist will go out to the site next week to complete the wetland delineation that is required for the new project design. The Washington State Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) will amend the grant to redirect the funding that was to be provided for construction to pay for the final redesign and permitting. Unfortunately, the new project design for the riprap removal will not be finalized before funding expires in June. Funding for the final design could be packaged with the funding for construction. Lisa is trying to schedule a meeting with all of the different permitters. Pete Haase and other volunteers have been out at the site conducting pre-construction forage fish surveys. Although spawning has been documented on neighboring properties, no signs of spawning have been observed at the project site. Paul Dinnel and Jason Morgan determined that a boat would likely be the best option to help with beach seining at this site. WDNR has a boat and might be interested in helping with monitoring at the site.
- **Bowman Bay Nearshore Restoration, Jay Lind/Lisa Kaufman:** The permitting process is almost complete. The Hydraulic Project Approval has been received and most of the other permits have been waived. Caldera Archaeology will complete the required reporting to Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation. As soon as the consultation with the tribes is finalized, the project will be ready to go out to bid. It is anticipated that the bid posting will occur in May for construction in September. The Skagit MRC grant is providing funding for the permitting, final design, and plants. The Marine Nearshore Grant program funding will be used to pay for construction. The Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group completed the planting design and will do all of the planting after construction. Volunteers continue to monitor the beach for forage fish spawning. So far no signs of eggs have been found.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day, Kari Odden:** The Fidalgo Bay Resort has been reserved for August 29<sup>th</sup>. The event will be coordinated with the Friends of Skagit Beaches Trail Tales National Estuaries Day event along the Tommy Thompson Trail. Pre-event task assignments, a timeline and preliminary budget have been established by the planning committee. Catherine Buchalski created the 'Save the Date' poster that Bob Weathers sent out to the partners and participants and the street banner has been reserved. Wayne Husbey is coordinating the Shannon Point Marine Center's portable aquarium with Mira Lutz. Volunteers will be recruited to assist with the aquarium since the students will not be available. Lin Folsom is coordinating with local restaurants to provide samples of

seafood chowders and brownies and will obtain the food handlers permit from the County Health Department, reserve the hand washing station, and provide an inventory of supplies and materials needed. Paul Dinnel is coordinating with Taylor Shellfish to provide samples of shellfish and will help prepare the sauces. Sue Ehler will help plan youth activities and coordinate supplies. The planning committee will meet again on May 11 at Padilla Bay, 2:30PM. Let Kari or Tracy know if you would like to participate in the planning process or if you would like to help at the event.

- **Olympia Oyster Restoration, Paul Dinnel:** Paul is working on a project proposal for a potential new oyster restoration site at Cypress Island in Secret Harbor. Todd and WDNR will visit the site to see if the location is appropriate for oyster restoration. Paul also prepared and submitted an application to Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) for transferring Pacific oyster shell from Blau Oyster to Fidalgo Bay for larval settlement monitoring and is coordinating permits for seeding. He is also currently in the process of applying for a Joint Aquatic Resource Permit Application (JARPA) to deploy oyster shell and Olympia oyster seed at Cap Sante Marina Seafarers Park with approval from the Port and City of Anacortes. In addition, Paul is working with the Puget Sound Restoration Fund to put out shell strings throughout Fidalgo Bay.
- **Pinto Abalone Restoration, Paul Dinnel:** Approximately 2,000 pinto abalone seed were planted last month at the four established locations at Burrows and Allan Islands, and two new locations at Cypress Island. A follow-up monitoring trip occurred two weeks ago to collect the tubes to see if the abalone dispersed. They usually leave the tubes within a few days, but some will stay. Monitoring the abalone for survival, growth, and signs of natural recruitment will continue through the spring and summer months. To learn more about pinto abalone and the restoration effort, check out the videos and documentary on the Puget Sound Restoration Fund's website: <http://www.pintoabalone.org/projects/pintoabalone>.
- **Shoreline Landowner Workshop, Betsy Stevenson:** Skagit MRC and the Northwest Straits Foundation sponsored a Shoreline Landowner Workshop that was held on **Saturday, March 14** at the Fidalgo Bay Resort in Anacortes from 10:00am to 3:00pm. MRC Chair Jay Lind provided welcoming remarks. Betsy set up the MRC display and helped answer questions. The workshop was taught by Jim Johannessen of Coastal Geologic Services. Betsy counted around 55 landowners who attended the workshop. The workshop was well received. Participants learned about coastal processes, impacts of shoreline armoring, how to protect their property from erosion and alternatives to hard armoring. Several participants applied for a free technical site visit from qualified professionals. Higher priority will be given to those properties interested in removing or reducing bulkheads, especially if they have feeder bluffs and if there are multiple properties along the same stretch of shoreline who are interested. The MRC will be involved in process for prioritizing and selecting properties to receive site visits. The group of properties living along the same stretch of shoreline on Guemes Island has already been selected for a site visit which will likely take place the end of May. Leftover project funding (if any) could be used for an extra workshop or additional site visits. Tom Slocum can assist with site visits for bulkhead prevention which will help keep costs low. As part of the outreach campaign, the Foundation will mail out informational brochures to shoreline property owners who have bulkheads. The brochures will also be made available to the public at County and City permit counters.
- **Nearshore Monitoring:** The NWSF is working in collaboration with WDFW and Deception Pass State Park to provide a forage fish survey training workshop at Bowman Bay for volunteers. Forage fish survey training will also be offered to MRC members this spring through the NWSC and WDFW on May 7th. The NWSF is working in collaboration with RE-Sources, the Coastal Volunteer Partnership, and the Friends of Skagit Beaches Trail Tales to offer intertidal monitoring training to volunteers in April. Two volunteers are helping with data entry for monitoring data collection. The beach seining schedule at Bowman Bay has been set and volunteers are scheduled to go out this Friday. The Samish Indian Nation is leading the beach seining effort in Fidalgo Bay and is seeking volunteers to help.
- **Sound IQ, Tracy Alker:** The County recently hired a new intern, Jason Quigley, who is helping to collect mapping information for Sound IQ. Kari has files of mapping data that Jason can go through to include in Sound IQ.

### **Project Proposal Discussion**

Per consensus of the Committee, it was determined that MRC alternates can be a Project Lead as long as they are active participants. Pete Haase, Morty Cohen's alternate, volunteered to be the MRC Project Lead for Fidalgo Bay Day. Skagit MRC identified the following project proposals as the top priority for the 2015-2016 MRC Grant:

## 2015-2016 Skagit MRC Grant Proposals

Project	Budget	MRC Project Lead	Comments
<b>MRC Operations</b>	\$13,000	Tracy Alker	
<b>Fidalgo Bay Day</b>	\$3,000	Pete Haase	Budget for purchasing supplies, permits, banner, ads, children's activities
<b>Salish Sea Stewards/Beach Naturalists</b>	\$18,000	Morty Cohen	40 hour volunteer training and coordination administered under the CVP
<b>Pinto Abalone Restoration</b>	\$15,000	Paul Dinnel	Budget for the production of abalone seed, surveys of six restoration sites, reconnaissance at two new sites
<b>Olympia Oyster Restoration (Secret Harbor)</b>	\$5,000	Paul Dinnel	*This budget could be reduced for oyster cultch bags/seed and monitoring at a potential new site at Secret Harbor
<b>Nearshore Monitoring</b>	\$10,871	Jamey Selleck	*Can reduce the number of beach seining, to lower the costs.
<b>Shannon Point Nearshore Restoration Final Design</b>	\$6,000	Paul Dinnel	*Budget could be reduced to \$5,000 for final design. The Committee should also consider getting this project funded by whoever funds the construction
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$70,871</b>		

The following projects were considered, but will not be included in the 2015-2016 MRC grant application.

Project	Budget	MRC Project Lead	Comments
<b>Educational Videos Highlighting the Work of the Skagit MRC</b>	\$6,000	Jay Lind	More time is needed to work out some of the details of this project. This project will not be included in the 2015-2016 Budget but will be considered in the 2015-2016 Work Plan.
<b>Derelict Boat Removal Near Kukutali/Kiket State Park</b>	Over \$100k	Julie Barber	The MRC determined that this project is not feasible at this time because the cost far exceeds the MRC budget.
<b>Kayak-based Kelp and Plankton Monitoring (2 or 3 sites)</b>	\$2,000	No Project Lead	MRC members expressed concern about the safety and insurance coverage of volunteers. The Committee decided not to include this project in the 2015-2016 Budget. However, if there is enough interest from volunteers, it could be included in the 2015-2016 Work Plan.
<b>Derelict Crab Pot Survey and Removal in Fidalgo Bay and Crabber Outreach</b>		Jay Lind	The Northwest Straits Foundation found a source of funding for regional crabber outreach and will help seek additional funding for crab pot surveys and removal in Fidalgo Bay.

### Miscellaneous Events and Announcements:

- **Fidalgo Shoreline Academy:** April 11 at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort. Joe Gaydos from the SeaDoc Society is the Keynote Speaker. "Walk-Ins" are welcome.
- **Mount Vernon High School Science Night:** April 23<sup>rd</sup>. Betsy Stevenson will host the Skagit MRC display.
- **Swinomish Canoe Journey Blessing of the Fleet:** May 14, 2015 at noon. Everyone is invited.

The meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, May 14, 2015, at the Skagit County Administration Building in Mount Vernon.



# SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the **May 14, 2015** meeting, held at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort (9:00am to 11:00am)

## Attendees:

- **MRC Members Attending:** Tracy Alker, Morty Cohen, Jay Lind, Kari Odden, Paul Dinnel, Jamey Selleck, Liz Lovelett, Betsy Stevenson, Nathan Biletnikoff, Christine Woodward
- **MRC Members Absent:** Teri Switalski, Julie Barber
- **Others Attending:** Pete Haase (Morty Cohen's MRC Alternate); Sharon Riggs, Padilla Bay NERR; Todd Woodard (Christine Woodward's MRC alternate); Sarah Tchang, Port of Anacortes

**Call to Order and Introduction:** Jay Lind chaired the meeting which began at 9:05 a.m.

**Approval of Minutes:** The April 9, 2015, MRC meeting minutes were approved as written.

**Public Comments:** None

## Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Report, Christine Woodward

*NWSC meeting, April 24th, 2015 WebEx Conference Call*

- **NWSC Meeting Topics:** The NWSC is seeking ideas for topics for presentations or discussion for future meetings. Contact Ginny with suggestions.
- **NWSC Chair:** Christine announced that she will be stepping down as NWSC Chair and a new Chair will be appointed at the May 29<sup>th</sup> NWSC meeting. Christine also announced that she will be retiring January 8, 2016 and recommended that Todd Woodard replace her as the representative for the Samish Indian Nation on the Skagit MRC.
- **MRC Project Proposals:** Proposals are due May 31, 2015.
- **Puget Sound Partnership (PSP) Funding Update:** \$250k will be going to each Local Integrating Organization (LIO) to implement their two year action plan. Skagit County is currently the only county without an LIO. PSP receives federal funding through the United States Environmental Protection Agency. It will be difficult to get PSP funding without having an LIO.
- **MRC Conference- Save the Date!** November 6-7 at the Lakeway Inn in Bellingham. A survey on session topics will be going out soon.
- **Next NWSC Meeting:** May 29<sup>th</sup>, Padilla Bay. Each MRC will give a presentation on at least one project proposal at the May 29<sup>th</sup> NWSC meeting. Jamey Selleck will present the Pinto Abalone Restoration project proposal for the Skagit MRC.

## Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) Report, Jay Lind:

- **Fundraising "Give Big" Campaign:** The NWSF raised \$7,600 during their spring fund drive.
- **NWSF Executive Director:** The NWSF board will start conducting interviews beginning the week of June 6th.

## NWSC Representative Election

Per consensus of the Committee, Jamey Selleck was appointed as the NWSC Representative for the Skagit MRC. Kari Odden will continue to be the Alternate NWSC Representative through December 2015 and Paul Dinnel will take over as Alternate starting in January 2016.

## MRC Membership Update

The Port of Anacortes recently hired Sarah Tchang as the new Environmental Specialist and recommended Sara replace Teri Switalski as the Port's representative on the Skagit MRC. Per consensus of the Skagit MRC, the Committee will make the recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to appoint Sarah Tchang to the MRC as the Port of Anacortes representative and Teri Switalski as the alternate.



## Administrative Report, Tracy Alker:

- **Forage Fish Survey Training:** Rescheduled for May 21 at the Fidalgo Bay Resort from 10am to 3pm.
- **Ocean Health Forum:** Thursday, June 11<sup>th</sup> from 6:30pm to 8:00pm at the Fidalgo Bay Resort. Doors open at 6:00pm. The panel of speakers will include: Christine Woodward, Ginny Broadhurst, Brooke Love, and Bill Dewey. The focus will be on ocean acidification. Volunteers are needed to help set- up around 5:30pm and clean up after 8:00pm.
- **MRC Name Badges and Business Cards:** The committee discussed the idea of getting name badges or hats as a way to identify MRC members at special events, workshops, conferences, and while out in the field. In the past it has been difficult to get approval to use MRC funds to purchase hats, but Tracy agreed to look into it again. There are a couple options for purchasing name badges. For around \$92.50, including a \$35 setup fee, we can purchase digitally printed biodegradable name badges with the MRC logo. Tracy will look into whether or not we would have to pay the set-up fee every time we purchase name badges for new members. The other option would be to purchase window badges where the names could be changed out as members come and go. For this option, there is a minimum order of 25, so the initial costs would be a little more expensive. Tracy also offered to print MRC business cards for MRC members who are interested. Just let her know how many and what information you would like to have on them.
- **MRC Travel Reimbursement Approval:** MRC member Jamey Selleck expressed concerned that he might not be able to continue to attend very many MRC meetings or NWSC meetings due to an unforeseen change in his employment status. Tracy pointed out that there are MRC funds available to reimburse MRC members for travel for MRC related activities such as conferences, workshops, and NWSC meetings. Although these funds have never been used for travel to MRC meetings in the past, they could be. The consensus of the Committee was to approve travel reimbursement for Jamey.

## Project Status & Discussion

- **Salish Sea Stewards/Beach Naturalists, Morty Cohen:** 25 new volunteers recently completed the 2015 Salish Sea Stewards training. A short graduation ceremony and potluck took place after the last class. Each participant that completed the training was awarded a Skagit MRC Salish Sea Stewards pin. This very enthusiastic group of volunteers is already engaged in forage fish surveys, intertidal monitoring, and beach seining. Catherine offered to teach the volunteers how to report their volunteer hours online using the Coastal Volunteer Partnership's (CVP) new program after the coffee social this Friday at Padilla Bay. Everyone is welcome to come to the coffee social from 10:00am-12:00pm. It's a great way for volunteers to discuss how the program is going, what they are working on, upcoming events and volunteer opportunities. The Salish Sea Stewards committee will meet with Catherine, Ginny Broadhurst and the former Island County Beach Watchers to discuss the possibility of coordinating and expanding the Salish Sea Stewards program to other regions. There will be an informal six month review with all of the CVP funding partners to discuss how things are going and where things are heading with each of the programs coordinated under the CVP. A three hour Beach Naturalist refresher training took place Thursday, May 7<sup>th</sup> at Sunset Beach in Washington Park in Anacortes. Many Salish Sea Stewards participated. The Beach Naturalists are scheduled to be at Sunset Beach in Washington Park several Saturdays this summer. A display table will be set up with handouts, species ID cards and books, a shell ID display, etc.

### Beach Naturalist Schedule at Washington Park in Anacortes:

- May 16, 9 AM-12 PM
- May 23, 1-4 PM
- May 30, 9 AM-12 PM
- June 6, 12-3 PM
- June 13, 9 AM-12 PM
- June 20, 12-3 PM\* (Shannon Point Touch Tank)
- July 4, 11 AM-2 PM
- July 18, 11 AM-2 PM\* (Shannon Point Touch Tank)
- August 1, 11 AM-2 PM
- August 15, 11 AM-2 PM
- August 29, 9 AM-12 PM

\*On June 20<sup>th</sup> and July 18<sup>th</sup> the Shannon Point Marine Center mobile touch tank at the park.



*Left: WWU Shannon Point Marine Center Public Education Specialist, Mira Lutz, teaches Salish Sea Steward graduate, Jim Gleeson, about the many species of crabs on the beach at Washington Park*

- **Shannon Point Nearshore Restoration, Paul Dinnel:** The City of Anacortes and Western Washington University are still under negotiations regarding the potential trail design. Coastal Geologic Services started their investigations for the revised design. Tina Mirable, a wetland biologist, did an assessment of the wetland. The extent of the wetland is greater than first assumed which could potentially have an impact on the final design. It is anticipated that the revised 60% design will be completed by June 1. The Northwest Straits Foundation will

seek additional funding for the final design and permits. See 'Nearshore Monitoring' below for monitoring updates at this site.

- **Bowman Bay Nearshore Restoration, Jay Lind:** All environmental permits have been received. Caldera Archaeology has been contracted for the cultural resources component. They will apply for the excavation permit with the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation. An archaeologist must be on hand during all activities and a permit is required. Caldera will also provide the oversight. State Parks is handling the tribal consultation. The final design and the design specifications are complete. The bid package is currently being prepared and will be ready to go to bid as soon as we get approval following the tribal consultation. Construction will begin in mid September, 2015. State Parks will store some of the rock for future use. See 'Nearshore Monitoring' below for monitoring updates at this site.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day, Kari Odden:** The Fidalgo Bay Resort has been reserved for August 29<sup>th</sup>. The event will be coordinated with the Friends of Skagit Beaches Trail Tales National Estuaries Day event along the Tommy Thompson Trail. Pre-event task assignments, a timeline and preliminary budget have been established by the planning committee. This year's event will be dedicated in honor of former MRC member, Ric Boge who recently passed away. A Certificate of Appreciation will be awarded to Ric's family in his memory. The event planning committee had a meeting on May 11 and will meet again in June or July. There are a lot of moving parts to making this event happen so assigning leads for certain tasks will be extremely helpful. Morty agreed to be the lead for parking and said he will need at least three or four volunteers to help. Pete will be in charge of the Zero Waste component. He will find out whether or not the clam and oyster shells can be composted. Nate and Jay offered to help Kari with children's activities. Christine volunteered to be in charge of clean up at the end of the event and making sure everything is put away properly. Other volunteers will be recruited to assist the task leads. The Northwest Straits Foundation has offered to donate \$500 to help support the event.
- **Olympia Oyster Restoration, Paul Dinneel:** Field season is just getting started. Received a permit from the WA Department of Fish and Wildlife for transferring Pacific oyster shell and seed from Blau Oyster to Fidalgo Bay for larval settlement monitoring. Paul hopes to recruit volunteers to help fill oyster cultch bags this weekend. Volunteers will also be recruited to help distribute the oyster cultch bags around Fidalgo Bay and retrieve the old oyster cultch bags that were put out last year to monitor oyster settlement. The Joint Aquatic Resource Permit Application (JARPA) to deploy oyster shell and Olympia oyster seed at two new locations at Cap Sante Marina and Seafarers Park is currently being processed. Brian Allen, with the Puget Sound Restoration Fund, is proposing to institute a new monitoring scheme for native oyster recruitment which would involve placing oyster shell on a wooden dowel to create oyster settlement substrate. Paul will work with Brian to implement this new technique at several locations in Skagit County.
- **Pinto Abalone Restoration, Paul Dinneel:** Pinto abalone outplanting took place in early March as part of a collaborative effort with the Puget Sound Restoration Fund, WDFW, and Shannon Point Marine Center. Approximately 2,000 pinto abalone seed were planted at the four established locations at Burrows and Allan Islands, and two new locations at Cypress Island. Preliminary monitoring results indicate that the abalone are growing larger in size and density with their numbers doubling and spreading beyond the four original plots at Burrows and Allan Islands. Monitoring the abalone for survival, growth, and signs of natural recruitment will continue through the spring and summer months.
- **Shoreline Landowner Workshop, Betsy Stevenson:** Skagit MRC and the Northwest Straits Foundation sponsored a shoreline landowner workshop on March 14th at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort in Anacortes. Over 50 people attended the workshop. MRC member Todd Woodard volunteered to review the proposed list of shoreline properties prioritized to receive site visits. Most of the proposed site visits are located on Guemes and Samish Islands. There is likely to be funding left over for additional site visits or another workshop.
- **Nearshore Monitoring, Jamey Selleck:** All monitoring activities are in progress at Bowman Bay, NW March's Point and Shannon Point. So far there has been great volunteer participation. The new Salish Sea Stewards seem excited and have already jumped right in to help.
  - **Beach Seining:** Beach seining at Bowman Bay hit a few snags due to lots of ulva. The seining schedule has been rearranged to occur at higher tides to try to avoid it. The interesting news is that lots of post-larval surf smelt were caught, even though they are not spawning at Bowman Bay. Jason is in the process of trying to find someone with a boat to assist with pre-construction beach seining at Shannon Point.
  - **Forage Fish Surveys:** Forage fish surveys continue at each of the project sites, but no signs of spawning have been observed.

- Large Woody Debris and Beach Wrack: The trial runs for the large woody debris and beach wrack at Bowman Bay, Shannon Point, and NW March's Point have been completed. First round resulted in lots of questions. Jason is consulting with Jason Toft to refine our methods.
- Intertidal Surveys: The classroom session for the intertidal survey training took place at the RV Park. There were over 40 participants. The field training session was held on Sunday, May 17<sup>th</sup> at Washington Park in Anacortes. Surveys will take place during summer low tides.
- Sound IQ, Tracy Alker: The County intern is collecting Skagit MRC data for Sound IQ. The data spreadsheet is almost complete. Skagit MRC members will review the data before it is posted online.

### Project Proposal Discussion

Skagit MRC finalized the budget for the following project proposals as the top priority for the 2015-2016 MRC Grant Workplan:

2015-2016 Skagit MRC Grant Budget			
Project	Estimated Budget	MRC Project Lead	Comments
<b>MRC Operations</b>	\$16,229	Tracy Alker	Budget for travel, supplies, display updates, meeting refreshments, staff time, etc.
<b>Fidalgo Bay Day</b>	\$3,500	Pete Haase	Budget for purchasing supplies, permits, banner, ads, children's activities
<b>Salish Sea Stewards/Beach Naturalists</b>	\$18,000	Morty Cohen	40 hour volunteer training and coordination administered under the CVP
<b>Pinto Abalone Restoration</b>	\$18,900	Paul Dinnel	Budget for the production of abalone seed, surveys of six restoration sites, and high resolution temporal sampling at the Cypress Island sites
<b>Olympia Oyster Restoration</b> <i>(Secret Harbor &amp; Fidalgo Bay)</i>	\$2,500	Paul Dinnel	Budget to purchase oyster seed, cultch bags, and temperature sensors
<b>Nearshore Monitoring</b> <i>(Shannon Point and Bowman Bay)</i>	\$10,871	Jamey Selleck	*SRI funds will be used support nearshore monitoring in Fidalgo Bay
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$70,000</b>		

### Miscellaneous Events and Announcements:

- **Community Ocean Health Forum**: Thursday, June 11<sup>th</sup> from 6:30pm to 8:00pm at the Fidalgo Bay Resort. Doors open at 6:00pm. The focus will be on ocean acidification.
- **Fort Townsend Beach Monitoring Training**: May 20, 2015 at Port Townsend
- **Diggin' for Dinner**: May 22, 2015 at Port Townsend
- **Pigeon Guillemot Monitoring Training**: May 27, 2015 at Island County
- **Oiled Wildlife Training**: May 30 & June 13, 2015 at the Clallam County Fairgrounds
- **MRC Presentation Skills Training**: June 4 & 18, 2015 at the Padilla Bay Reserve
- **Blaine Water Fest**: June 7, 2015 at Blaine Port
- **Trail Tales Phase 2 Sign Dedication**: Saturday, June 13, 2015 from 10:00am to 12:00pm at Seafarers' Park in Anacortes
- **Padilla Bay Five Year Management Plan Revisions**: The draft narrative is ready for technical review before it goes out for public comment. Contact Sharon Riggs know if you are interested in reviewing the content.
- **Oil by Rail Safety Forum**: City of Anacortes Council members Liz Lovelett and Ryan Walters hosted a community forum on oil by rail safety, preparedness, and response on Wednesday May 6, 2015. Speakers included U.S. Rep. Rick Larsen and representatives from both refineries, Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad, Washington State Department of Ecology and Skagit County Department of Emergency Management. The forum was attended by over 100 community members. Citizens were given the opportunity to ask questions and leave written testimony. Click this link to watch the forum on YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/6tcvVLRH6dk> or this link on Channel 10: <http://stream.cityofanacortes.org/cc/05-06-2015/>. Nathan Biletnikoff stated that the forum was a great opportunity for Shell Puget Sound Refinery. He also said that Shell is planning to continue dialogues with the community on crude oil transportation in the days and months ahead.

- **Phase 2 Weaverling Spit Restoration Project:** Christine announced the Samish Indian Nation secured grant funding for the project. They are currently seeking matching funds.
- Nate announced that the Anacortes Shell Refinery recently hired a new communications manager, Cory Ertel. Cory is interested in learning more about the work of the MRC and potential opportunities to partner on future projects in Fidalgo or Padilla Bay. Nate will try to schedule a meeting to discuss this further.

**The meeting adjourned at 11:08 a.m. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, June 11, 2015, at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort in Anacortes.**



# SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the **June 11, 2015** meeting, held at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort (9:00am to 11:00am)

## Attendees:

- **MRC Members Attending:** Tracy Alker, Jay Lind, Kari Odden, Paul Dinnel, Liz Lovelett, Nathan Biletnikoff, Todd Woodard (Christine Woodward's MRC alternate), Pete Haase (Morty Cohen's MRC Alternate), Sarah Tchang, Julie Barber
- **MRC Members Absent:** Christine Woodward, Morty Cohen, Jamey Selleck, Betsy Stevenson
- **Others Attending:** Sharon Riggs, Padilla Bay NERR; Richard Brocksmith, Skagit Watershed Council

**Call to Order and Introduction:** Jay Lind chaired the meeting which began at 9:05 a.m.

**Approval of Minutes:** The May 14, 2015, MRC meeting minutes were approved as written.

**Public Comments:** Richard Brocksmith announced that the Skagit Watershed Council is partnering with the Skagit Climate Science Consortium and the Museum of Northwest Art (MoNA), to launch the [2015 Surge Festival](#) to help draw attention to climate change and its potential impact on the Northwest coastal communities through art. Artists will work with environmental researchers and educators to create art exhibits and participatory art activities to help present a new perspective on climate change. Topics will include sea level rise and storm surge; flooding and impacts on habitat, biota, and people; risk and resiliency; and changes we are seeing in our local environment. A call went out to artists to submit proposals. The deadline for proposals is July 1. The event is scheduled for the weekend of September 26-27, 2015 at MoNA in La Conner. Richard encouraged the Skagit MRC to consider participating in the event and sharing the information with others who also might be interested in participating. For more information visit the MONA website: <http://www.monamuseum.org/surge-festival-call-artists>.

## Forage Fish Survey Update, Pete Haase

Pete reported that over the last three years more than 50 volunteers have helped with forage fish surveys. There are currently 25 volunteers who are actively surveying at least two or three times a month. Survey sites include the Washington Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve and Skagit MRC's nearshore restoration sites (NW March's Point, Bowman Bay, and Shannon Point). So far there have been no signs of forage fish eggs at any of Skagit MRC's restoration sites. However, there are lots of eggs at the Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve sites. Forage fish survey training for MRC volunteers took place on May 21 at the Fidalgo Bay Resort. It was a really great turnout! The training was sponsored and coordinated by the Northwest Straits Commission and taught by the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife. It included classroom and field training as well as some lab training with microscopes. The forage fish training presentation and materials are available on the Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) website: [http://www.nwstraits.org/media/1517/ffpresentation\\_training.pdf](http://www.nwstraits.org/media/1517/ffpresentation_training.pdf). Volunteers learned how to sample eggs using the new Blue Bowl Vortex Method. This method has been tested and proven to be more effective at finding eggs than the other methods. Pete asked the Skagit MRC to consider purchasing the supplies to build our own Blue Bowl Vortex sampling device for the nearshore restoration monitoring sites where they haven't been finding any eggs (i.e. Bowman Bay, Shannon Point and NW March's Point). The consensus of the Skagit MRC was to allocate approximately \$500 of MRC operation funds to purchase the supplies for one or two Blue Bowl Vortex sampling devices. The Northwest Straits Foundation is coordinating additional lab training with microscopes for a small group of volunteers on Monday, June 29 at Padilla Bay.

Richard Brocksmith asked whether or not there are plans to expand the sampling program to other areas than just the restoration sites. The Committee expressed interest in expanding to other sites, but there are a few things that will need to be figured out first such as: identifying data gaps and where the priority sites are, developing a county-wide monitoring plan, getting permission and access to the sites, identifying leads for the different sites, insurance coverage for volunteers, sampling equipment, training and coordinating additional volunteers, etc.. Caroline helped initiate the Puget Sound Ecosystem Monitoring Program (PSEMP) Forage Fish & Food Webs Work Group (<https://sites.google.com/a/psemp.org/psemp/for>) and will be working with the MRCs to help expand the forage fish surveys throughout the Northwest Straits Region. Jay Lind suggested inviting Caroline to a future MRC meeting for an update. Richard suggested it would be a good idea to share the data with others who are doing similar work. The data



will most likely be made available through the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife as well as the Northwest Straits Commission's Sound IQ.

### Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Report, Jay Lind

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*NWSC meeting, May 29, 2015 Padilla Bay*

- **MRC Conference- Save the Date!** November 6-7 at the Lakeway Inn in Bellingham. Dr. Florian Graner is the keynote speaker. Conference updates can be found on the NWSC website: <http://www.nwstraits.org/2015-mrc-conference>.
- **2014 NWSC Annual Report:** Hard copies are now available. The report is also available online: <http://www.nwstraits.org/media/1502/2014-nwstraits-annualrpt.pdf>.
- **MRC Project Proposal Presentations:** Representatives from each MRC presented a project for the upcoming grant year. The presentations were all excellent! Jay said it was really great to hear what the other MRCs are working on.
- **NWSC Chair/Vice Chair Elections:** Christine recently completed her two year term as NWSC Chair and NWSC representative on the Washington Marine Resources Advisory Council, established to address ocean acidification issues in Washington State. Thank you for a job well done Christine! Nan McKay will replace Christine as NWSC Chair and Jerry Masters was voted as a temporary vice-chair.
- **Next NWSC Meeting:** June 26, WebEx Conference Call, 10am – 12pm. NWSC Representative Jamey Selleck and NWSC Alternate Representative Kari Odden are both unable to attend the June 26<sup>th</sup> NWSC meeting, so Christine Woodward volunteered to participate in the conference call on behalf of the Skagit MRC. The July 31 NWSC meeting will be held in Snohomish County and will include a presentation by the Department of Ecology on net pen aquaculture.

### Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) Report, Jay Lind:

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- **Fundraising "Give Big" Campaign:** The NWSF raised around \$8,000 during their spring fund drive.
- **NWSF Executive Director:** The NWSF board is in the process of interviewing four highly qualified candidates. They hope to have a new Executive in place by next Wednesday.
- **NWSF Board Elections:** Lenny Corin was elected NWSF Board President and Jay Lind was elected Vice President.
- **NWSF Board Members:** There are currently nine board members. NWSF plans to start searching for candidates for new board members soon. The primary mission of the NWSF board members is to help seek additional funding sources for the work of the seven MRCs.
- **Derelict Crab Pots:** The Foundation's crab pot study results should be ready this fall. More education is needed on how to properly rig the crab pots with rot cord. The Foundation received funding for crabber outreach. Jay approached Puget Sound Anglers to seek funding to help support crab pot removal in Fidalgo Bay. Crab pot removal isn't a high priority in the Puget Sound Partnerships Action Agenda, so it will be difficult to get grant funding. Jay will look into approaching other potential funding sources such as dive clubs as well. Nate suggested contacting the Project Aware Foundation for funding to support the removal of derelict crab pots.
- **Derelict Gear Removal Celebration:** August 13<sup>th</sup> at the Port of Everett Boxcar Park to celebrate the culmination of removal of shallow water derelict fishing nets from Puget Sound.

### Administrative Report, Tracy Alker:

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- **Ocean Health Forum:** Thursday, June 11<sup>th</sup> from 6:30pm to 8:00pm at the Fidalgo Bay Resort. Doors open at 6:00pm. The panel of speakers will include: Christine Woodward, Ginny Broadhurst, Brooke Love, and Bill Dewey. The focus will be on ocean acidification. Volunteers are needed to help set-up around 5:30pm and clean up after 8:00pm. This event is sponsored by the NWSC, Samish Indian Nation, and Skagit MRC. Tracy strongly encouraged MRC members to attend.
- **MRC Project Proposals:** Proposals were submitted before the May 31<sup>st</sup> deadline. Tracy thanked the MRC project leads for getting the proposals in on time.
- **MRC Grant Quarterly Progress Reports: Due July 16.** MRC members were asked to report volunteer hours and project updates to Tracy by July 10<sup>th</sup>.

### Project Status & Discussion

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- **Salish Sea Stewards/Beach Naturalists, Pete Haase:** 25 new volunteers recently completed the 2015 Salish Sea Stewards training. This very enthusiastic group of volunteers is already engaged in forage fish surveys, intertidal

monitoring, and beach seining. The volunteers are signing up for activities and reporting their hours in the Coastal Volunteer Partnership's new online volunteer management system. The Salish Sea Stewards sub planning committee will meet later this month to evaluate the program. The Beach Naturalists are scheduled to be at Sunset Beach in Washington Park several dates this summer. In addition, Mira Lutz will bring the Shannon Point Marine Center mobile touch tank to the park on June 20<sup>th</sup> and July 18<sup>th</sup>. A display table will be set up with handouts, species ID cards and books, a shell ID display, etc. The Beach Naturalist schedule can be viewed on the [Skagit MRC website](http://www.skagitmrc.org) ([www.skagitmrc.org](http://www.skagitmrc.org)). The Beach Naturalists have received a lot of positive feedback from the public about their interpretive program at the beach. Catherine and several volunteers hosted the MRC display along with the other Coastal Volunteer Partnership displays at the two-day Anacortes Waterfront Festival. Over 600 contacts were made! The Coastal Volunteer Partnership has been a really great clearing house for volunteers. They have been able to fill a lot of needs for the MRC and partner organizations.

- **Shannon Point Nearshore Restoration, Paul Dinneel:** Nothing new to report. Pre construction monitoring continues.
- **Bowman Bay Nearshore Restoration, Jay Lind:** Nothing new to report. Everything is still on track for construction to begin mid-September, 2015. Pre-construction monitoring continues. The beach seining has sparked a lot of interest from the public, particularly from school groups.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day, Kari Odden:** The Fidalgo Bay Resort has been reserved for August 29<sup>th</sup>. The event will be coordinated with the Friends of Skagit Beaches Trail Tales National Estuaries Day event along the Tommy Thompson Trail. Pre-event task assignments, a timeline and preliminary budget have been established by the planning committee. Leads have been assigned for each task. The planning committee will meet again in June or July. Event fliers were handed out to the public at the Anacortes Waterfront Festival. Kari plans to contact the press in July to get an article in the paper.
- **Olympia Oyster Restoration, Paul Dinneel:** Paul and a handful of volunteers filled oyster cultch bags and distributed them around Fidalgo Bay and retrieved the old oyster cultch bags to monitor oyster settlement from last year. Preliminary results indicate that it was the second highest settlement recorded in Fidalgo Bay. Most of the oyster settlement occurred along the trestle. The Joint Aquatic Resource Permit Application (JARPA) to deploy oyster shell and Olympia oyster seed at two new locations at Cap Sante Marina and Seafarers Park is currently being processed and is expected to be approved soon. Brian Allen, with the Puget Sound Restoration Fund, is proposing to institute a new monitoring scheme for native oyster recruitment which would involve placing oyster shell on a wooden dowel to create oyster settlement substrate. Paul will work with Brian to implement this new technique at several locations in Skagit County. Volunteers will be recruited to help with the monitoring.
- **Pinto Abalone Restoration, Paul Dinneel:** Pinto abalone outplanting took place in early March as part of a collaborative effort with the Puget Sound Restoration Fund, Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife, and Shannon Point Marine Center. Approximately 2,000 pinto abalone seed were planted at the four established locations at Burrows and Allan Islands, and two new locations at Cypress Island. Preliminary monitoring results indicate that the abalone are growing larger in size and density with their numbers doubling and spreading beyond the four original plots at Burrows and Allan Islands. Monitoring the abalone for survival, growth, and signs of natural recruitment will continue through the spring and summer months. Paul pointed out that poaching is still a big concern. Seattle Times reporter Craig Welch wrote a book about shellfish poaching in Puget Sound called [Shell Games](#) back in 2009.
- **Shoreline Landowner Workshop, Betsy Stevenson:** Skagit MRC and the Northwest Straits Foundation sponsored a shoreline landowner workshop on March 14th at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort in Anacortes. Over 50 people attended the workshop. As a follow-up to the shoreline landowner workshop held on March 14th at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort in Anacortes, the Northwest Straits Foundation developed a list of shoreline properties prioritized to receive site visits. The Foundation's recommendations were reviewed by MRC member Todd Woodard. Most of the proposed site visits are located on Guemes and Samish Islands. There is likely to be funding left over for additional site visits or another workshop.
- **Nearshore Monitoring:** Nothing new to report. Monitoring continues. If you are interested helping, please contact Jason Morgan: [morgan@nwstraitsfoundation.org](mailto:morgan@nwstraitsfoundation.org). Pete noted that the Trail Tales docents have a display that they set up in coordination with the forage fish surveys and intertidal monitoring to help educate the public about what the volunteers are monitoring and why it is important. The displays include posters and a demo of how the monitoring is done. It really draws a lot of attention and has become a valuable outreach tool.
- **Sound IQ, Tracy Alker:** Tracy is reviewing the data compiled by the intern before submitting it to Suzanne Shull.

### Miscellaneous Events and Announcements:

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- **Community Ocean Health Forum:** Tonight, Thursday, June 11<sup>th</sup> from 6:30pm to 8:00pm at the Fidalgo Bay Resort. Doors open at 6:00pm. The focus will be on ocean acidification.
- **Trail Tales Phase 2 Sign Dedication:** Saturday, June 13, 2015 from 10:00am to 12:00pm at Seafarers' Park in Anacortes.
- **Clean Samish Initiative Samish Watershed Open House-** June 13<sup>th</sup>, 11am-1pm at the Alger Community Hall. Tracy will host the MRC display and new putt-putt storm drain game!
- **NWSF Derelict Gear Removal Celebration:** August 13<sup>th</sup> at the Port of Everett Boxcar Park to celebrate the culmination of removal of shallow water derelict fishing nets from Puget Sound.
- **Skagit Restoration Initiative (SRI) Request or Proposals:** Todd Woodard announced that the Samish Indian Nation submitted a proposal for SRI funding for the Phase 2 Weaverling Spit Restoration Project. SRI funds would be used as a match for the grant funding already secured for the project.

**The meeting adjourned at 10:50 a.m. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, July 9, 2015, at the Skagit County Administration Building in Mount Vernon.**



# SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the July 9, 2015 meeting, held at the Skagit County Administration Building in Mount Vernon (9:00am to 11:00am)

## Attendees:

- **MRC Members Attending:** Tracy Alker, Jay Lind, Kari Odden, Nathan Biletnikoff, Todd Woodard (Christine Woodward's MRC alternate), Sarah Tchang, Morty Cohen, Jamey Selleck
- **MRC Members Absent:** Christine Woodward, Betsy Stevenson, Julie Barber, Paul Dinnel, Liz Lovelett
- **Others Attending:** Sharon Riggs, Padilla Bay NERR; Pete Haase (Morty Cohen's MRC Alternate); Lisa Kaufman, NWSF; Carlye Nelson, Padilla Bay NERR

**Call to Order and Introduction:** Jay Lind chaired the meeting which began at 9:00 a.m.

**Approval of Minutes:** The June 11, 2015, MRC meeting minutes were approved as written.

**Public Comments:** Morty Cohen announced that the Friends of Skagit Beaches is dedicating a plaque 'In Loving Memory of Ric Boge' that will be attached to the eelgrass Trail Tales interpretive sign located on the east end of the trestle on the Tommy Thompson Trail in Anacortes. The plaque was paid for by several families and friends. Ric Boge was a former MRC member and an active volunteer in our local community before he passed away last January.

## Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Report, Jamey Selleck:

*NWSC meeting, June 26, 2015 WebEx Conference Call (Attended by Christine Woodward)*

- **MRC Conference- Save the Date!** November 6-7 at the Lakeway Inn in Bellingham. Dr. Florian Graner is the keynote speaker. Six main session topics were identified from the conference survey. Conference updates can be found on the NWSC website: <http://www.nwstraits.org/2015-mrc-conference>.
- **Derelict Net Removal Celebration:** August 13<sup>th</sup> at the Port of Everett Boxcar Park to celebrate the culmination of removal of shallow water derelict fishing nets from Puget Sound. Unfortunately, the Skagit MRC meeting is scheduled that same day. The consensus of the Skagit MRC was to cancel the August 13<sup>th</sup> Skagit MRC meeting to participate in the derelict net removal celebration.
- **NWSC Executive Committee:** Seeking an MRC member to join the Executive Committee. Contact Ginny if you are interested.
- **MRC Project Field Trips:** Ginny is soliciting ideas for MRC project field trips for elected officials this summer. Skagit MRC discussed the possibility of organizing a field trip to Bowman Bay or Weaverling Spit. We could arrange a site visit to both sites in the same day. We could also schedule it during a beach seining event.
- **Next NWSC Meeting:** Friday, July 31<sup>st</sup> at the Snohomish County Campus. The meeting will include a presentation by the Department of Ecology on net pen aquaculture.

## Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) Report, Jay Lind:

- **NWSF Executive Director:** The NWSF board is in the process of negotiating with a perspective candidate for the Executive Director position.

## Administrative Report, Tracy Alker:

- **MRC Grant Quarterly Progress Reports: Due July 16.** Tracy thanked the MRC members for reporting their volunteer hours and providing project updates.
- **2015-2016 MRC Grant Proposals:** We received comments back from the NWSC and made a few revisions. The grant proposals are now being reviewed by the Science Advisory Committee for technical review.
- **Presentation Skills Training Opportunity:** For those MRC members who missed the last presentation skills training for explaining science, it is being offered again by The Coastal Training Program: Oct 8<sup>th</sup> & 22 in Mt Vernon 9am-4pm for \$125. Sara Tchang attended the last presentation skills training for MRC members and said it was excellent.
- **Future Guest Speakers and Meeting Agenda Ideas:** Tracy solicited ideas for guest speakers and agenda items for future MRC meetings.

## Project Status & Discussion

- **Salish Sea Stewards/Beach Naturalists, *Morty Cohen/Pete Haase*:** A volunteer appreciation potluck was held at Washington Park in Anacortes on June 25<sup>th</sup>. A de-briefing session with the Salish Sea Stewards planning committee and Ginny was held on June 30 to review the successes of the 2015 training. All agreed that the 2016 training should see a reduction in overall lecture time, offer more hands-on skill instruction, and include more time for making personal connections within the group. Let Morty or Pete know if you have any ideas or suggestions for training topics for 2016. As per the evaluation plan, a 3 month post course survey will be distributed to the graduates in July to assess volunteerism and overall course experience. Ginny is helping to facilitate communications with other counties who have expressed interest in setting up similar volunteer training programs. Morty is looking into coordinating a session for the Salish Sea Stewards program at the MRC conference this year. An ice cream social will be held at Padilla Bay on July 21 in coordination with a presentation on eelgrass research in Padilla Bay. The Beach Naturalists at Washington Park made over 140 contacts with visitors so far this summer. On July 18<sup>th</sup> the Beach Naturalist program at Washington Park will include the Shannon Point mobile touch tank which attracts lots of interest from the public!
- **Shannon Point Nearshore Restoration, *Lisa Kaufman/Paul Dinnel*:** Coastal Geologic Services has completed approximately 60% design level for the updated design that includes placement of a retaining wall at the toe of the bluff below the community association and landward of the causeway. The Northwest Straits Foundation met with the adjacent landowners to present the new design. The City and Western Washington University (WWU) are still in negotiations regarding the trail. As long as the new design doesn't preclude the trail, they said they would be okay with it. But Lisa will need to get in touch with the City and WWU to confirm. A wetland assessment has been completed and results showed that the retaining wall will encroach into the wetland buffer. The wetland biologist suggested we do plantings to offset the impacts of the wall to the buffer. We will need to find funding for construction. It is anticipated that we will receive an additional \$50,000 from USFWS Puget Sound Coastal Program. Pre-construction monitoring continues. Beach seining began in June, resulting in many fish, both in numbers and diversity. A Salish Sea Steward volunteer provided a boat to assist with beach seining at the site. Lots of different species of fish have been observed at the site. Intertidal and forage fish egg sampling is also continuing.
- **Bowman Bay Nearshore Restoration, *Lisa Kaufman/Jay Lind*:** The bid process has been delayed until tribal consultation can be completed, which likely will occur at the end of this month. Everything is still on track for construction to begin late-September or early October, 2015. Pre- construction monitoring continues. NWSF has funding for an education and outreach component for this project including interpretive signage, a time lapse video of the construction, and scheduling monitoring days and low tide beach walks for the public. In addition, a project completion celebration will be planned for the spring of 2016. Press releases will be sent out. Funding for education and outreach runs through September 2016.

In addition, as part of the education and outreach effort, the committee discussed the idea of making the forage fish and beach seine monitoring into a larger community event on Friday, July 24<sup>th</sup>. If approved by the State Parks, a press release would be sent out to invite community members to learn more about what 'monitoring' is, and to participate in these hands-on activities. The Trail Tales display table will be set up with posters about forage fish and citizen science monitoring. Fact Sheets for the upcoming nearshore restoration project of Bowman Bay and the Fidalgo Bay Day event will also be provided. In addition, Jay Lind noted that a student from WWU who is working on a short documentary about forage fish for the Friends of Skagit Beaches will be there to interview Jay about the Bowman Bay project.

- **Fidalgo Bay Day, *Kari Odden*:** The Fidalgo Bay will be held August 29<sup>th</sup> at the Fidalgo Bay Resort. The event is being coordinated with the Friends of Skagit Beaches Trail Tales National Estuaries Day event along the Tommy Thompson Trail. Pre-event task assignments, a timeline and preliminary budget have been established by the planning committee. Leads have been assigned for each task. The youth activities committee met yesterday. Lots of Kid's hands-on activities are being planned. There will be a lot of the same art activities that we had last year to use up some of the materials (e.g. button making, note cards, fish prints, etc.). One new activity that is being planned is face painting. There will be several games including: poop toss, storm drain putt putt, and forage fish bean bag toss. Participants and presenters have been contacted. Laura James confirmed that she will be participating and will bring her Remote Operating Vehicle to demonstrate on the beach and Christine Froschl from the Environmental Science Center will bring a fantastic indoor forage fish egg survey activity for kids. Mira Lutz will bring the Shannon Point Marine Center's mobile touch tank. The Samish will provide canoe rides. Catherine Buchalski will have a marine debris art display and a plastics and garbage sorting activities that



demonstrates how long the materials break down in the environment and impact to marine life. Jay Lind will coordinate with Jason Morgan to put together a crab pot display to demonstrate the correct and incorrect ways to rig the pots and biodegradable cords. Jay plans to hand out crabber outreach packets. Pete Haase will be in charge of the Zero Waste component. Pete and Lisa Miller are drafting a short survey for visitors to help evaluate the event, find out what people have learned, and make improvements for next year. Kari received several tote bags and stickers from the Puget Sound Partnership that will be given to folks who are willing to participate in the survey. The planning committee will meet again on July 27<sup>th</sup>. Planning, coordination, and event promotion continues. A volunteer signup sheet will be distributed for volunteers to sign up for specific tasks.

- **Olympia Oyster Restoration, Paul Dinneel:** Finished the routine annual sampling at the Fidalgo Bay trestle seed plot, retrieved and deployed a few additional cultch bags to monitor larval settlement and deployed a bunch of new "shell string" devices around Fidalgo Bay. These new samplers may eventually replace the cultch bags we've used in the past and may become the standard sampling unit all around Puget Sound. Additional sampling in Padilla Bay and Fidalgo Bay will take place July 30 and 31 and possibly August 1<sup>st</sup>.
- **Pinto Abalone Restoration, Paul Dinneel:** Nothing new to report.
- **Shoreline Landowner Workshop, Lisa Kaufman:** Following the workshop there were a lot of requests for site visits. Site visits were held at various locations on Samish Island and Guemes Island to look for potential opportunities to prevent or remove bulkheads and softshore options. Some properties had bulkheads and some did not. A total of four site visits were held on Samish Island all along one stretch of shoreline. A combined report was generated for a segment where multiple property owners were represented. Similarly on Guemes Island, several workshop participants and their neighbors on the west side of the island received site visits. Some parcels were adjacent to each other, while others were separated. This group had a strong interest in trying to remove armoring or improve habitat where feasible, unfortunately, most have minimal setbacks so their options are limited.
- **Nearshore Monitoring:** Monitoring continues at MRC restoration sites including: intertidal surveys, beach profiles/beach wrack, forage fish surveys, and beach seining. There has been a lot of interest from the public regarding the monitoring work. It has been a great opportunity for public outreach. There are still no signs of forage fish eggs at any of the restoration sites. Pete Haase is currently using the Blue Bowl setup for searching for eggs. The Northwest Straits Foundation coordinated a forage fish egg identification lab training for a handful of volunteers on July 2 at Padilla Bay, taught by Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife at Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve. The purpose of this training was to further our efforts in forage fish spawning surveys at Skagit MRC/NWSF restoration sites. This training covered new field sampling methods at different tidal heights with a strong focus on egg identification with the use of microscopes in the lab, including identifying egg development stages. Skagit MRC and the NWSF are working to develop a plan to begin conducting lab analysis of samples collected at Skagit restoration sites. A portion of these samples will then be passed on to WDFW for QA/QC analysis.
- **Sound IQ, Tracy Alker:** Nothing new to report.

#### **Miscellaneous Events and Announcements:**

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- **Ediz Hood Beach Clean Up- July 5, 2015** in Port Angeles
- **Puget Sound Environmental Monitoring Program (PSEMP) Forage Fish Work Group Meeting: July 23, 2015** from 10:00AM to 12:30PM at Padilla Bay. Jamey Selleck is the Chair.
- **Bowman Bay Monitoring Day- July 24, 2015** at Deception Pass State Park, Bowman Bay.
- **NWSC Meeting- July 31, 2015** at the Snohomish Count Campus
- **Skagit Land Trust Annual Meeting and Volunteer Appreciation Picnic: August 8, 2015** at Elysium in Concrete from 11:00AM – 2:00PM.
- **Derelict Net Removal Celebration- August 13, 2015** in Everett
- **American Fisheries Society Conference- August 16-20, 2015** in Portland
- **Maiden of Deception Pass- August 20, 2015** at the Lincoln Theatre in Mount Vernon
- **NWSC Meeting- August 28, 2015, WebEx**
- **Fidalgo Bay Day- August 29, 2015** at the Fidalgo Bay Resort in Anacortes
- **Wooden Boat Festival- September 11-13, 2015** in Port Townsend
- **Whatcom Water Weeks- September 12-26, 2015** in Bellingham
- **Green Crab Trapping Program at Padilla Bay**– Padilla Bay NERR has been setting traps since 2001 to monitor non-native crabs using Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) protocol. SeaGrant wants to start

another volunteer trapping program at Padilla Bay. They will be using 3 minnow traps and 3 folding fish traps and will alternate methods. They will also use strand line surveys.

- **Padilla Bay Beach Camp for Underserved Youth in Skagit County-** This special week long camp is geared toward middle school youth. It will take place during two separate weeks in July. It primarily reaches out to Hispanic families, but any kids can attend.
- **Samish Indian Nation and DNR Marine Debris Cleanup Update:** 40,000lbs of marine debris have been removed. However, there is still a lot of creosote out there including a big load of approximately 15,000lbs on Cypress Island on DNR owned property. The good news is they have not observed a lot of repopulation of debris after it has been removed.

The meeting adjourned at 10:10 AM The Skagit Restoration Initiative meeting followed the MRC meeting to evaluate project proposals. **The August 13<sup>th</sup> MRC Meeting Has Been Canceled** to support of the Derelict Net Removal Celebration. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, September 10, 2015, at the Skagit County Administration Building in Mount Vernon.



# SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the **September 10, 2015** Skagit County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) meeting, held at the Skagit County Administration Building in Mount Vernon (9:00am to 11:00am)

## Attendees:

- **MRC Members Attending:** Tracy Alker, Jay Lind, Kari Odden, Nathan Biletnikoff, Todd Woodard (Christine Woodward's MRC alternate), Morty Cohen, Jamey Selleck, Julie Barber, Betsy Stevenson
- **MRC Members Absent:** Christine Woodward, Paul Dinnel, Liz Lovelett, Sarah Tchang
- **Others Attending:** Sharon Riggs, Padilla Bay NERR; Pete Haase (Morty Cohen's MRC Alternate); Carlye Nelson, Padilla Bay NERR; Tim Manns (Kari Odden's MRC Alternate)

**Call to Order and Introduction:** Jay Lind called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. and opened the meeting with introductions.

**Approval of Minutes:** The July 9, 2015, MRC meeting minutes were approved as written. Skagit MRC did not have a meeting in August because it conflicted with the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative's Derelict Gear Removal Celebration in Everett.

**Public Comments:** Skagit MRC member Jamey Selleck presented at the American Fisheries Society conference in Portland. Jamey's presentation highlighted some of Skagit MRC's nearshore restoration work which was well received.

## Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Report, Jamey Selleck:

*NWSC meeting, August 28, 2015 WebEx Conference Call*

- **MRC Conference- Save the Date!** November 6-7 at the Lakeway Inn in Bellingham. Dr. Florian Grainer is the keynote speaker. Conference updates can be found on the NWSC website: <http://www.nwstraits.org/2015-mrc-conference>. MRCs will be asked to give a short presentation on one of their projects. Jamey suggested doing a presentation on the nearshore restoration monitoring work in Skagit County. The Committee agreed this would be a great project to present. Jamey said he would coordinate with Jason Morgan. The Committee will discuss this further at the October MRC meeting.
- **NWSC Staff Updates:** The NWSC recently hired Nicole Jordan to fill Holly's position. Caroline will be leaving the Commission later this fall to serve as Executive Director of the Northwest Straits Foundation. She will likely be making that transition at the MRC conference in November. A job announcement has already been posted to fill her current position.
- **Kelp Kayak Surveys:** It was pointed out that the Skagit MRC is the only MRC not participating in the kelp monitoring effort. This project would require an MRC project lead. The MRC project lead would be responsible for coordinating the project but wouldn't necessarily have to be the one who does the kayak surveys. There are several volunteers who have expressed interest in helping with this project. Morty said that he knows someone who might be interested in becoming an MRC member and project lead for the kelp monitoring project. The purpose of this project is to show presence/absence and compare to historical data to map the change over time. The kelp beds in the Northwest Straits region are not currently well documented. The NWSC created a kelp fact sheet to help with outreach.
- **NWSC and MRCs Getting International Attention!** Ginny Broadhurst gave a presentation about the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative and MRCs at a conference in Korea. Joan Drinkwin gave a presentation about the derelict gear removal project in London. And Kathleen Herman gave a presentation about Snohomish MRC projects in Scotland.
- **Local Integrating Organization (LIO):** Skagit County is the only county that does not have an LIO. Unfortunately, all near term actions (habitat, stormwater, shellfish) in a specific geographic region must go through the local LIO process in order to receive any future funding from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) through the Puget Sound Partnership.
- **MRC Site Visits with Legislators:** It was suggested that the MRCs should plan to host a field trip to help ensure that local elected officials and state legislators know what's going on in their districts.

- **Net Pens:** National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) gave a presentation on net pens at the July NWSC meeting in Everett. NOAA is conducting a non-biased study on the environmental impacts and the pros and cons of fish net pens. Each County has their own set of regulations regarding net pens. No new net pens have been allowed in 10 years. The NWSC wants to continue the net pen discussion.
- **NWSC Executive Committee:** Jamey Selleck was appointed as one of two MRC reps on the NWSC Executive Committee.
- **Next NWSC Meeting Friday, October 2, 2015:** the meeting will be held in Clallam County at the Jamestown S'Klallam tribal Center's Red Cedar Room. There will be a tour of the carving shed by master carver Dale Faulstich for those who are interested.

#### Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) Report, Jay Lind:

- **NWSF Executive Director:** Caroline Gibson was recently hired as the NWSF's new Executive Director. Caroline is a welcome addition to the Foundation. She has experience with non-profits and understands the ins and outs of the NWSC and NWSF. Caroline will likely fully transition into her new position with the Foundation at the MRC conference in November.
- **NWSF Seeking New Board Members:** The NWSF currently has 8 members and can have as many as 15. The Foundation is seeking recommendations for new board members from the MRCs. The next board meeting will be October 8<sup>th</sup>.
- **NWSF Fundraising:** Fundraising continues to be a bit of a challenge. Jay is attending a workshop on fundraising for nonprofits on September 18<sup>th</sup>.
- **NWSI Derelict Gear Removal Celebration-** The event was held on August 13<sup>th</sup> in Everett and was well attended. Several elected officials participated in the celebration including Skagit County Commissioner Ron Wesen, Senator Patty Murray, and family members of the late Senator Jack Metcalf. Senators Murray and Metcalf were responsible for establishing the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative. The derelict gear removal project was widely covered by the local media and aired several times on King 5 and [Komo 4](#) news. The Foundation is now looking for funding to remove nets from deeper waters. Jamey said that NOAA currently has some funding available for marine debris removal.

#### Administrative Report, Tracy Alker:

- **MRC Grant Quarterly Progress Reports: Due September 16.** Tracy thanked the MRC members for reporting their volunteer hours and providing project updates. All grant deliverables are due no later than September 30<sup>th</sup> when the grant expires.
- **2015-2016 MRC Grant Proposals:** Tracy is in the process of reviewing the draft agreement and making revisions. All monitoring projects should be linked to the Puget Sound Environmental Monitoring Program (PSEMP) where possible. A signed grant agreement will likely be in place by the end of October.
- **MRC Conference Travel Reimbursement:** MRC members can get reimbursed for mileage for the MRC conference but cannot get reimbursed for hotel stay since it is in Bellingham this year. The MRC conference is open to all MRC members and alternates. Please let Tracy know if you have not received an invitation.
- **Future Guest Speakers:** The committee discussed ideas for guest speakers for future meetings. Julie Barber volunteered to give a short presentation on the historical changes in clam abundance at the October MRC meeting. Other ideas included: Sharon Riggs or Jude Apple from Padilla Bay - presentation on Padilla Bay research such as eelgrass density, bycatch in invasive crab traps, or baseline salt marsh research. Jason Morgan - update on nearshore monitoring results. Josh Bouma - presentation on pinto abalone restoration. Emily Grason - presentation on invasive green crabs. Suzanne Shull - presentation on mapping projects. Joan Drinkwin - derelict crab pot study.
- **MRC Membership Update- Todd Woodard:** Christine Woodward plans to retire in December and has recommended that Todd Woodard take her place on the MRC roster. Per consensus of the Committee, the recommendation will be made to the County Commissioners to appoint Todd Woodard as Christine Woodward's replacement on the Skagit MRC roster. Nobody opposed. Christine will continue to serve as Todd's alternate until she retires in December. Todd will represent the Samish Indian Nation's interest group.
- **Local Treasure Video:** At the end of the MRC meeting, Tracy shared the Environmental Science Center's video called "Local Treasure" about the Seahurst Beach restoration project. In case you missed it, you can watch the video online: <https://vimeo.com/131940617>.

## Project Status & Discussion

- **Salish Sea Stewards/Beach Naturalists, Morty Cohen:** The summary report is complete. Catherine will give a 10 minute presentation on the Salish Sea Stewards program at the MRC meeting next month. Volunteers who completed the Salish Sea Stewards training program have been busy all summer helping with a variety of projects. They were asked to complete an online survey at the end of the summer to help evaluate the Salish Sea Stewards program. Next year the training will likely be a little longer than 40 hours. Some of the classroom training will be combined with field training in the same day/week for more effective training. Contact Morty if you have any ideas for training topics or presenters. Morty said that former Beach Watchers are having a bit of an identity crisis and are still unsure what to call themselves. After some discussion it was decided that it would probably be helpful to give the former Beach Watchers some direction and ask them to start calling themselves Salish Sea Stewards. That way there would be less confusion and more unity among the volunteers. Although the Skagit MRC doesn't own the Salish Sea Stewards name, the Committee agreed that it is important for the Salish Sea Stewards training model and standards be consistent with the one developed by the Skagit MRC. Referring to our program as the Skagit MRC Salish Sea Stewards will help differentiate from the other organization who might also want to use the Salish Sea Stewards name. It is important that the Salish Sea Stewards training is considered an MRC project and not viewed as pass-through funding. If the other MRCs decide to adopt our Salish Sea Stewards model it will help solidify it as an MRC program and strengthen the support of the Northwest Straits Initiative. Morty plans to follow up with Ginny about including the Salish Sea Stewards program as one of the sessions at the MRC conference.
- **Shannon Point Nearshore Restoration, Jamey Selleck:** The Northwest Straits Foundation received \$50,000 from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to continue moving forward with this project. The Foundation will continue looking for additional construction money.
- **Bowman Bay Nearshore Restoration, Jay Lind:** The bid opening will occur this Friday, September 11 at 2:00pm. Everything is still on track for construction to begin October, 2015. NWSF now has a signed grant agreement in place for an education and outreach component for this project including interpretive signage, a time lapse video of the construction, and scheduling monitoring days and low tide beach walks for the public. Lisa Kaufman hopes to get a committee together soon to start putting ideas together for interpretive signs. In addition, a project completion celebration will be planned for the spring of 2016. Elected officials will be invited to the celebration. Funding for education and outreach runs through September 2016. Dean Alker volunteered to help create a video using a drone to capture aerial footage of the project site before, during and after construction. Dean will be at the project site on September 18<sup>th</sup> to capture aerial footage of the beach seining. He will also use a GoPro on a stick to try to capture the underwater perspective during beach seining.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day, Kari Odden:** The 12<sup>th</sup> annual Fidalgo Bay Day was held August 29<sup>th</sup> at the Fidalgo Bay Resort in coordination with the Friends of Skagit Beaches Trail Tales National Estuaries Day event. This year's event was extra special because it was dedicated in memory of former MRC member Ric Boge. Despite the weather and power outage, the event was a huge success! Thanks to Jay's son Matt who went and got mini lanterns from the hardware store, we weren't completely left in the dark. The presenters, volunteers and attendees rolled with the weather and power loss and everyone appeared to be having fun. Some even said we should have it by candle light every year. We counted over 250 visitors! A big 'Thank You' goes out to the 50 volunteers (including several MRC members), 19 organizations and 5 businesses who came together to help support this year's event. We couldn't have done it without you! There was a nice article about the event in the [Skagit Valley Herald](#). Some of the highlights included: Shannon Point Marine Center's aquarium touch tank, beach seining demonstration, forage fish walks, games, kids friendly crafts, interactive educational displays, passport activity, complimentary seafood samples, and Samish no-host BBQ. The beach seining was originally supposed to be canceled due to the weather, but thanks to Jason Morgan and Dan Pentilla, they were able to make it happen. It was a huge hit!! Unfortunately, we still had to cancel the Samish canoe rides due to the high winds. The Trail Tales passport stations were originally supposed to be along the Tommy Thompson trail but were moved inside due to the weather. Having the Trail Tales passport stations inside really helped some of the presenters become more engaged with the guests. The guests were encouraged to visit the educational displays in order to get the really great passport prizes. Having the passport activity inside is something we will consider for next year. Pete said he conducted a survey with some of the guests and got a lot of positive feedback. Kari is working on the final report and thank you cards will be sent out soon. A debrief meeting will be scheduled in a few weeks. Betsy thanked Kari and Tracy for all of their work in coordinating the event. Morty pointed out that Catherine Buchalski also deserves special recognition for the huge role she played in coordinating the volunteers for the event.



- **Olympia Oyster Restoration, Tracy Alker:** During the last week of August, Paul retrieved the first set of 3 shell strings deployed at the trestle in Fidalgo Bay, leaving the second set of 3 for retrieval next spring/summer. There was a heavy set of native oysters on the shells, averaging 24.0 native oysters per cultch shell. Paul noted that on some shells the density was so thick (and clumped) that some oysters have little chance of surviving and some will very likely be overgrown by their neighbors. Paul assessed the settlement in the new Fidalgo Bay shell plots earlier this summer and discovered lots of young, fast growing native oysters. There are substantially more native oysters in Fidalgo Bay than we've had in the past. There is also evidence that native oyster settlement was very strong again this year.
- **Pinto Abalone Restoration, Tracy Alker:** The Puget Sound Restoration Fund completed the final report. Please let Tracy know if you would like to receive a copy.
- **Shoreline Landowner Workshop, Betsy Stevenson:** A Shoreline Armoring Reduction Project (SHARP) advisory committee conference call was held Monday, September 1<sup>st</sup> to discuss the results of the spring landowner workshops, site visits, and armor removal designs, and plan for upcoming fall workshops. They also discussed future funding and new upcoming funding structures through the Local Integrating Organizations. It is important to ensure armor removal and prevention is a priority on the LIO workplans. A workshop funded by the SHARP grant from the Northwest Straits Foundation will be held in Skagit County on Saturday, October 24<sup>th</sup> from 10:00am to 12:30pm. The location is yet to be determined. If you have any suggestions for a location please contact Betsy or Tracy.
- **Nearshore Monitoring, Jamey Selleck:** Monitoring continues at MRC restoration sites (i.e. Shannon Point, Bowman Bay, and NW March's Point) including: intertidal surveys, beach profiles/beach wrack, forage fish surveys, and beach seining. Lots of eggs have been found at NW March's Point restoration site and Mrs. Markwood has reported seeing lots of spawning activity for the first time in years! Jason Morgan is compiling data from the various monitoring activities and is working with Jamey to analyze the preliminary intertidal data which will be presented at the Volunteer Appreciation Day. The Northwest Straits Foundation will be receiving \$4,500 from Tesoro to continue to support monitoring in Fidalgo Bay. Beach seining continues monthly at Bowman Bay. The Samish Indian Nation is in charge of the monthly beach seining at Fidalgo Bay. Beach seining will start up again at Shannon Point in November.
- **Sound IQ, Tracy Alker:** Jason Quigley, the County's intern, compiled data and reports and sent them to Suzanne to include in Sound IQ data sharing. Tracy will send the data spreadsheet to MRC members who are interested.
- **Skagit Restoration Initiative (SRI), Tracy Alker:** The NWSF has an agreement in place with the Samish Indian Nation for the next phase of Weaverling Spit. The SRI committee will meet after the October MRC meeting to discuss the budget and current workplan.

#### **Miscellaneous Events and Announcements:**

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- **Wooden Boat Festival-** September 11-13, 2015 in Port Townsend
- **Whatcom Water Weeks-** September 12-26, 2015 in Bellingham
- **Skagit River Salmon Festival-** September 12, 2015 at the Swinomish Casino
- **Coastal Volunteer Partnership Volunteer Appreciation Day-** October 3, 2015 at Padilla Bay
- **Northwest Straits Foundation Volunteer Appreciation Day-** October 1, 2015 at West Beach Deception Pass Park
- **Environmental Hero of the Year:** Pete Hasse was one of five people selected by RE-Sources to receive the Environmental Hero of the Year award. Congrats Pete!

**The meeting adjourned at 11:05 AM. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, October 8, 2015, at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort in Anacortes.**



# SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the **October 08, 2015** Skagit County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) meeting, held at the Fidalgo Bay Resort in Anacortes (9:00am to 11:00am)

## Attendees:

- **MRC Members Attending:** Tracy Alker, Jay Lind, Nathan Biletchnikoff, Christine Woodward (Todd Woodard's MRC alternate), Morty Cohen, Jamey Selleck, Julie Barber, Betsy Stevenson, Liz Lovelett, Sarah Tchang
- **MRC Members Absent:** Todd Woodard, Paul Dinnel, Kari Odden
- **Others Attending:** Sharon Riggs, Padilla Bay NERR; Pete Haase (Morty Cohen's MRC Alternate); Tim Manns (Kari Odden's MRC Alternate); Jeff Walker, AECOM (Shell); Doug Thompson, WDFW; Robert Harvey, NWSC; Lisa Kaufman, NWSF; Phyllis Bravinder, CVP; Catherine Buchalski, CVP; Wayne Huseby, FOSB; Brady Olson, SPMC

**Call to Order and Introduction:** Jay Lind called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m. and opened the meeting with introductions.

**Approval of Minutes:** The September 10, 2015, MRC meeting minutes were approved as written.

## Public Comments:

- **Silver Salmon Award:** Morty Cohen presented Catherine Buchalski with the Silver Salmon Award in recognition of her hard work, dedication, and enthusiasm in developing and managing the Coastal Volunteer Partnership at Padilla Bay and recruiting, training, and coordinating Salish Sea Stewards and Beach Naturalist volunteers. Catherine has really done an outstanding job and has gone above and beyond in supporting Skagit MRC projects and education and outreach efforts. Thank you for all that you do Catherine!!
- **Skagit Watershed Council's Community Engagement Plan:** Jay Lind reported that the Skagit Watershed Council is in the process of developing a community engagement plan to increase communication about salmon and other native fish recovery efforts in Skagit County. They are currently seeking input from partner organizations and collecting an inventory of education and outreach programs that are working on behalf of salmon, habitat, marine resources, and water quality. The information will be consolidated into one document that will be accessible to educators and the public. Richard Brocksmith plans to share more information at our next MRC meeting. Check out the Skagit Watershed Council's website for the latest information about Skagit salmon, their distribution, and how their populations are doing: [www.skagitwatershed.org](http://www.skagitwatershed.org).

## Shell Puget Sound Refinery Wetland Mitigation/Estuary Restoration Project, Jeff Walker and Nate Biletchnikoff:

Jeff Walker, with AECOM consultants, has been involved with the wetlands mitigation plan and permitting process for Shell Puget Sound Refinery's crude by rail project for the last two years. A low quality freshwater wetland is currently located at the proposed rail unloading facility project site. It mainly consists of pasture land with non-native grasses. There has been no past development at the site, so soil contamination is highly unlikely. However, as a precaution, monitoring protocols would be put in place for testing the soil for contaminants. As part of the wetlands mitigation plan, Shell is proposing to restore the estuary and tidal processes on approximately 73 acres located on the south side of Padilla Bay near telegraph slough. Although the plan is still very conceptual, it would likely involve building a levee setback, lowering the dike in certain areas and completely breaching the dike at one location. The dike next to the existing salt marsh would be left in place to help protect the salt marsh. Primary and secondary channels would be constructed throughout the estuary to help restore tidal influence and mudflat habitat. A short-term and long-term monitoring plan and conservation easement would be implemented at the restoration site. Shell has been working closely with the landowners and Dike District #12 throughout the planning process. Restoration work would occur simultaneous of the crude by rail holding area construction after Skagit County and the Department of Ecology completes the Final Environmental Impact State (FEIS) for the project. As part of the scoping phase of the EIS, three public meetings have been scheduled and are open for public comment. Scoping ends November 4<sup>th</sup>. Morty suggested the MRC participate in the scoping process and draft a comment letter. A tentative meeting date has been set for October 16, 2015. Let Tracy or Morty know if you are interested in participating or if you need to recuse yourself. A comment letter will not be submitted without MRC consensus.

### Historical Changes in Clam Abundance, Julie Barber:

Bivalves play an important ecological, economical, and cultural role. The Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) has been collecting intertidal clam survey data using the same methods since 1977 in order to estimate biomass and set Total Allowable Catches (TACs). Few studies have investigated how and why clam populations vary. WDFW has agreed to share their data with the Swinomish Tribe so they can analyze how wild clam populations have changed on decadal scales. Julie's research with the Swinomish mainly focuses on identifying long-term population trends within different Salish Sea sub-basins and determining what variables may play a role in population variation trends. The Dynamic Factor Analysis is the mathematical model used to predict trends. It describes temporal variation with a time series dataset. Other variables can also be added. Preliminary data indicates that the cockle biomass is declining at Camano Island but is increasing at Sequim; the littleneck biomass is declining in several sub-basins while the butter clam biomass seems to be increasing; and the biomass of all three clam species seems to be increasing at Fort Flagler while decreasing at Potlatch. The next part of Julie's research will be to complete the data entry, include additional beaches, and figure out why these trends are happening. Explanatory variables such as fishing mortality, sea surface temperature, and Pacific decadal oscillation, will need to be added to the model to attempt to quantify what may be driving these patterns.

### Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Report, Jamey Selleck:

*NWSC meeting, October 2, 2015 in Clallam County*

- **MRC Conference:** November 6-7 at the Lakeway Inn in Bellingham. Registration ends October 19<sup>th</sup>! You must book your hotel room by October 9<sup>th</sup> in order to get the discount government rate of \$89. Dr. Florian Grainer is the keynote speaker. Conference updates can be found on the NWSC website: <http://www.nwstraits.org/2015-mrc-conference>.
- **MRC Conference Field Trip:** Skagit MRC will be hosting a field trip to the Weaverling Spit beach restoration project at the Fidalgo Bay Resort on Friday, November 6<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 a.m. The field trip is being coordinated by Todd Woodard. Skagit MRC partnered with the Samish Indian Nation for Phase II and Phase III of the Weaverling Spit beach restoration project with Skagit Restoration Initiative funding. Samish Indian Nation secured additional grant funds that will be used as match for the construction. Phase III construction is scheduled to begin in September 2016 in conjunction with the new boat launch.
- **NWSC Staff Updates:** The NWSC recently hired Lucas Hart to fill Caroline Gibson's position as the new Marine Program Manager starting November 2, 2015. Lucas will be working out of the Port Townsend office.
- **Ginny's South Korea Trip:** Ginny Broadhurst reported on her recent trip to South Korea where she presented information about the NWSC and MRCs. Korean citizens were interested in learning how the MRC concept could be applied to South Korea where they are currently experiencing significant impacts to their coastal environment.
- **Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) Presentation:** Joan presented an overview of MRC projects that the NWSF is currently supporting.
- **Dungeness River Festival-** This year's three day event celebrates 100 years. Clallam MRC participates in this large event every year and expressed the importance of having something that draws the visitors to the displays such as hands-on activities, photo booths, arts and crafts, or games.
- **Next NWSC Meeting Friday, December 4, 2015 WebEx Conference Call**

### Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) Report, Jay Lind:

- **NWSF Executive Director:** Caroline will start her new position as the new Executive Director of the Northwest Straits Foundation on October 26, 2015. Caroline will be working out of the Port Townsend office.
- **Marine Debris Removal Funding:** Joan Drinkwin plans to apply for the Marine Debris Removal grant funding to remove derelict crab pots from marine waters in all MRC counties. The NWSF will work with MRCs to identify key areas and build media coverage to raise awareness in each county.

### Administrative Report, Tracy Alker:

- **2014-2015 MRC Grant Ended September 30, 2015:** All grant deliverables have been submitted. Tracy thanked the MRC members for reporting their volunteer hours and providing project updates.

- **2015-2016 MRC Grant:** The new grant was supposed to begin October 1, 2015, but we do not have a signed grant agreement yet. Unfortunately, we cannot start any of the projects until we have a signed grant agreement and new contracts in place.
- **MRC Gift Basket:** Tracy requested participation from MRC members to help collect local items for the Skagit MRC gift basket for MRC conference silent auction. If you have items you would like to donate, please contact Tracy. You can also donate experiences like kayaking, fishing or hiking trips, weekend getaways, etc.
  - **Action Item:** MRC members will contact Tracy with items to donate to the Skagit MRC Gift Basket
- **MRC Poster/Display:** Please let Tracy know if there is a particular MRC project, poster, video, hands-on activity, etc. that you would like to showcase at the MRC conference. Pete Haase suggested highlighting the nearshore monitoring work. Pete will look into bringing the Trail Tales portable forage fish monitoring display to the conference field trip at Weaverling Spit.
- **MRC Presentation to the County Commissioners-** Scheduled for Monday, November 16, 2015 at 10:30 a.m. Jamey and Jay will help with the presentation. MRC members are welcome to attend to show their support.
- **MRC Meeting - Nov 12, 2015 Canceled:** The MRC conference is November 6-7, just one week before the next MRC meeting on November 12th. Because the majority of MRC members indicated that they plan to attend the MRC conference or at least part of the conference the MRC conference, the consensus of the committee was to cancel the November 12<sup>th</sup> MRC meeting.
  - **Action Item:** November 12<sup>th</sup> MRC Meeting Canceled!

## Project Status & Discussion

- **Salish Sea Stewards/Beach Naturalists, Catherine Buchalski:** Catherine gave a presentation highlighting the accomplishments of the Salish Sea Stewards/Beach Naturalists programs and lessons learned.
  - **Salish Sea Stewards Training:** 25 new volunteers completed the 2015 Salish Sea Stewards training program last spring. The average class size was around 23 with participant ages ranging from 24 to over 70. The classes and field trips were taught by qualified experts (including several MRC members) and covered a wide range of marine science related topics, current issues impacting the Salish Sea, and priorities of the Skagit MRC and the NWS. In return for the 40 hours of free training, participants were asked to contribute at least 50 hours of volunteer service within a one year period. An online program called Volgistics was set up in order to help make it easier to track and record volunteer hours. Over 950 volunteer hours were logged over a six month period. Over 450 volunteer hours were contributed specifically towards MRC projects (not including Fidalgo Bay Day). It was a bit of a challenge to keep the volunteers engaged and feeling connected after the training. Some of the tactics used included the bimonthly electronic bulletin "The Wave", the Coastal Volunteer Partnership website ([www.coastalvolunteerpartnership.org](http://www.coastalvolunteerpartnership.org)) and Facebook page. In addition, Catherine organized monthly socials including: coffee socials, guided hikes, potlucks, presentations, and beach cleanups. Volunteers who completed the training were asked to participate in a survey at the end of the summer to help evaluate the program. One of the things the volunteers found most helpful was going on field trips to project sites where they were asked to volunteer their time. One of the lessons learned is that we need to have more hands-on practicum/lab skill building sessions during training.
    - **Beach Naturalists:** Six volunteers completed the one day interpretive training refresher class in 2015. Nine interpretive programs were scheduled at Washington Park over the summer. Two of the interpretive programs included the Shannon Point Marine Center's touch tanks. Not surprisingly, the touch tanks were very popular with visitors and drew the largest crowds. Beach Naturalists made over 200 contacts with visitors and contributed over 70 hours of volunteer services. One of the lessons learned is that interpretive training should be included as part of the Salish Sea Stewards training next year. Skagit MRC should also consider installing interpretive signage about the intertidal marine life/habitat and proper beach etiquette.
- **Shannon Point Nearshore Restoration, Jamey Selleck:** The Northwest Straits Foundation received \$50,000 from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to continue moving forward with this project. The Foundation will continue looking for additional construction money.
- **Bowman Bay Nearshore Restoration, Jay Lind/Lisa Kaufman:** Trimax Construction has been contracted to do the work. Construction is scheduled to begin the week of October 26, 2015. Construction should take around two weeks to complete. A time-lapse video will be setup to film the construction. A drone will also be used to capture aerial footage before, during, and after the construction. The Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group will hold a planting party with school groups on November 18<sup>th</sup>. The Washington Conservation Crew will install exclusion fencing to protect the plants from people and deer. NWSF has a grant agreement for an education and outreach component for this project including interpretive signage, a video, community monitoring days and low

tide beach walks for the public. Lisa Kaufman is seeking MRC members to participate on an advisory subcommittee to help with the planning process for the education and outreach component. Please contact Lisa or Jay if you are interested in participating. Funding for education and outreach runs through September 2016. For the interpretive signage, Christine suggested that we work with the Samish Indian Nation to help tie in cultural components and artwork, similar to the signage at Rosario. Liz suggested contacting the Anacortes Green Club to help with education and outreach because they are always looking for new project opportunities.

- **Action Item:** MRC members will contact Tracy or Lisa to participate on the education and outreach advisory committee for Bowman Bay.
- **Action Item:** Tracy will email the education and outreach proposal to the MRC.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day, Tracy Alker:** The 2015 Fidalgo Bay Day report is now complete and has been posted on the Skagit MRC website ([www.skagitmrc.org](http://www.skagitmrc.org)). Kari did an excellent job putting the report together. It really looks great! Thank you cards will be sent out soon to all of the volunteers and participants. Kari plans to schedule a debrief meeting and start planning for next year's event.
- **Olympia Oyster Restoration:** No Update
- **Pinto Abalone Restoration:** Monitoring was supposed to start in October, but will need to be postponed until the spring of 2016 due to a delay in getting a signed contract.
- **Shoreline Landowner Workshop:** A workshop was originally scheduled to take place October 24, 2015, but has been postponed until the spring of 2016.
- **Nearshore Monitoring, Jamey Selleck:** The next beach seining at Bowman Bay is tentatively scheduled to take place Oct 16, 2015. Beach seining will start up again at Shannon Point in November. Surf smelt eggs were discovered at the Skagit MRC NW March's Point restoration site, where they haven't been seen in many years. Christine noted that adult surf smelt and eggs were also discovered at the Custom Plywood site.
- **Sound IQ:** Robert Harvey, the NWSC intern, reported that they are currently working to post kelp survey data to Sound IQ. They are also working to develop a user manual with step by step guidelines to make it less confusing for MRC members to find the data they are looking for in Sound IQ.

#### Miscellaneous Events and Announcements:

- Coastal Volunteer Partnership Beach Cleanup at Camp Kirby, Samish Island on October 29, 2015.
- The City of Anacortes is currently seeking input regarding their comprehensive plan for developing Low Impact Development design standards near the waterfront.
- Shell Refinery's proposed crude by rail unloading facility public scoping meetings & comments schedule:
  - Mount Vernon: Tuesday, October 13, 2015 at Best Western Plus (2300 Market Street) 4-8 p.m.
  - Anacortes: Wednesday, October 14, 2015 at Anacortes Middle School (2202 M Ave) 4-8 p.m.
  - Lynwood: Monday, October 19 2015 Lynwood Convention Center (3711 196<sup>th</sup> St. SW) 4-8 p.m.
  - Online Open House: [shellraileis.publicmeeting.info](http://shellraileis.publicmeeting.info), through Nov 5, 2015
  - To comment by email: [comment@shellraileis.com](mailto:comment@shellraileis.com)

The meeting adjourned at 11:10 AM. The **November 12, 2015 MRC meeting has been canceled** due to the MRC conference scheduled the week before. The next MRC meeting will be held **Thursday, December 11, 2015**, at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort in Anacortes.





# SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the **December 10, 2015** Skagit County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) meeting, held at the Fidalgo Bay Resort in Anacortes (9:00am to 11:00am)

## Attendees:

- **MRC Members Attending:** Tracy Alker, Jay Lind, Nathan Biletznikoff, Todd Woodard, Morty Cohen, Jamey Selleck, Betsy Stevenson, Sarah Tchang, Paul Dinnel, Kari Odden
- **MRC Members Absent:** Julie Barber, Liz Lovelett
- **Others Attending:** Sharon Riggs, Padilla Bay NERR; Pete Haase (Morty Cohen's MRC Alternate); Tim Manns (Kari Odden's MRC Alternate); Lucas Hart, NWSC; Phyllis Bravinder; Michael See, SCPW; Dan Berentson, SCPW; Carlye Nelson (Student)

**Call to Order and Introduction:** Jay Lind called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. and opened the meeting with introductions.

**Approval of Minutes:** The October 8, 2015, MRC meeting minutes were approved as written.

**Public Comments:** No public comments

## Local Integrated Organization (LIO) and Near Term Action (NTA) Proposal Discussion:

**Local Integrated Organization (LIO):** The Puget Sound Partnership (PSP) is a Washington state agency with federal funding to convene Local Integrating Organizations (LIOs) to implement the [Action Agenda](#) at the local level, refine and confirm local action area priorities and rank local [Near Term Actions \(NTAs\)](#) project proposals for funding. The fiduciary agent for the LIOs can either be the County, a tribe, a non-profit, or a consultant, etc. Most regions have elected to hire a consultant to facilitate and implement their LIOs. There are currently nine LIOs that have been established in the Puget Sound area. Skagit County is the only region that does not currently have one. The LIO process started in Skagit County around five years ago. There was originally some dialogue about the possibility of designating either the Skagit Council of Governments or the Skagit Watershed Council as the fiduciary agent of the Skagit LIO. Since that time, County representatives have had several conversations with the Swinomish and Upper Skagit Tribes on what the Skagit LIO might look like. It was proposed that the LIO be led by an Executive Committee made up of elected tribal representatives and elected county representatives with Technical Subcommittees. It was also proposed that the LIO just focus on fish passage. Todd pointed out that it will be important for each tribe to have a representative on the LIO Executive Committee because not all the tribes share the same perspectives or priorities like fish passage. There is also some concern that the LIOs seem to be more of a "top down" approach. The timeline for establishing an LIO for Skagit County is unclear. It was suggested that the Puget Sound Partnership be invited for a televised work session with the Board of County Commissioners to discuss the LIOs and funding process.

**Near Term Actions (NTAs):** The Puget Sound Partnership is soliciting proposals for NTAs, to be included in the updated 2016–2017 Action Agenda in order to qualify for funding. The 2016–2017 Action Agenda will include NTAs that address three of the most critical problems for Puget Sound:

- Prevent pollution from stormwater
- Protect and restore habitat
- Recover shellfish beds

All NTA proposals must go through the LIOs and their ranking process for prioritizing actions for funding. Tribes will be exempt from having to go through the LIOs to submit NTAs. Those NTAs that are coordinated between counties and those that demonstrate a greater probability of success and include effectiveness monitoring to show measureable improvements will rank higher and have a higher likelihood of getting funded. Skagit does not currently have an LIO, so all funding proposals will need to go through the regional request process. The request process requires working with a regional entity such as the Northwest Straits Commission or the Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) to sponsor our NTA submittal. Regional entities will submit NTA proposals directly to the Strategic Initiative Transition Teams instead of going through the LIOs first. It is anticipated that around 600-700 NTAs will be submitted this year. The deadline for submittal is December 31, 2015.

Morty, Pete, and Tracy recently met with Ginny from the Northwest Straits Commission to discuss submitting an NTA proposal for the Salish Sea Stewards. Ginny will try to collaborate with Whatcom and Island Counties who have also expressed interest in establishing volunteer programs. Island County just recently broke away from WSU Beach Watchers. However, at this point it isn't very clear how cross-cutting proposals such as the Salish Sea Stewards, will be ranked given the focus on the three strategic initiatives. Skagit MRC is also working with the Northwest Straits Foundation to put together NTA proposals for Shannon Point nearshore restoration, Bowman Bay planting, and a feasibility study to see if the marsh at Bowman Bay could be connected to the salt water. In addition, the Foundation is also submitting a regional NTA for the Shoreline Armor Reduction Program (SHARP) for all of the MRCs. Although it is anticipated that the MRCs will still continue to receive the base funding of around \$73,000 from the PSP to support our projects, the NTA proposals, if awarded, would provide additional funding to support our current projects and help them grow. It would also help fund new projects that the base funding might not be able to support.

### Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Report, Jamey Selleck:

*NWSC meeting, December 4, 2015 WebEx*

- **NWSC Retreat:** The NWSC retreat will likely be held sometime in February at Padilla Bay. The NWSF board will also be invited to help improve communications between the NWSC and the NWSF.
- **MRC Conference:** The MRC conference was held November 6-7, 2015 at the Four Points by Sheraton in Bellingham. The survey results showed that 70-80% of people who attended gave the conference a very high ranking. They felt it was very informative and worthwhile. Conference highlights include the following: Skagit MRC hosted a field trip lead by Todd Woodard at the Weaverling Spit beach restoration site; the Keynote Speaker Dr. Florian Graner presented 'Using Cinematography to Encourage Conservation'; and there was a candid conversation between Senator Kevin Ranker and Ashley Ahearn, a reporter from KUOW, about legislative updates, the climate initiative, and communicating science. The concurrent sessions included: Puget Sound's Rockfish Recovery, the Nearshore: Why We Care and Restoration Priorities; Kelp Mapping and Monitoring; and Vessel Traffic in the Salish Sea. The presentations and conference materials are available on the NWSC website <http://www.nwstraits.org/2015-mrc-conference/>.
- **Kelp Monitoring Workshop:** Lucas Hart and Tom Mumford organized a kelp monitoring workshop that was held in Port Townsend from 10:00am to 3:00pm on December 5<sup>th</sup>. The workshop was well attended. The purpose was to discuss safety concerns and monitoring protocols. The Northwest Straits Foundation holds the insurance for the volunteers. Jon Gibbons recently gave a presentation to the Island County MRC on using drones for kelp surveys. Six of the MRCs are currently involved in kelp monitoring. Skagit MRC is looking for a project lead. Morty said he knows someone who might be interested.
- **Ocean Acidification Workshops:** The NWSC received a grant from NOAA to schedule several workshops on Ocean Acidification. Lucas Hart and the science advisory panel will lead this effort.
- **Next NWSC Meeting Friday, January 29, 2016** in Island County.

### Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) Report, Jay Lind:

- **NWSF Executive Director:** Caroline recently started her new position as the new Executive Director of the Northwest Straits Foundation. Caroline is working out of the Port Townsend office. The Foundation has a meeting this afternoon.
- **NWSF Funding:** It is anticipated that the NWSF will be receiving a generous donation of around \$70k from two private donors that will be made available to all of the MRCs through a competitive proposal process. There will be a review board to rank and award the MRC project proposals. A list of criteria will be developed and provided.
- **Skagit Restoration Initiative (SRI) Funding:** SRI funds are part of the Natural Resources Damages Settlement payment from Kimberly-Clark for the former Scott Paper Mill Site in Anacortes. The SRI funds are for restoration projects in Fidalgo and Padilla Bays. The NWSF administers the SRI funds which are overseen by the Skagit MRC. Skagit MRC requires a 1:1 match. The remaining uncommitted SRI balance is approximately \$30,000.

### Weaverling Spit, Phase 3 Update, Todd Woodard:

The Samish Indian Nation was recently awarded \$90,600 of SRI funding and secured matching funds to complete **Phase 3** of the Weaverling Spit Beach Restoration project. SRI funds were also used to complete Phase 2 of the Weaverling Spit project in 2012. Construction for Phase 3 is scheduled to begin in September 2016 and will take approximately two weeks to complete. Phase 3 will take place along the adjacent 660 feet of shoreline southeast of the Phase 2 area to the



boat ramp located at the Fidalgo RV Park. This project will increase the amount of continuous feet of restored forage fish habitat for Fidalgo Bay to 1,760 feet. The objectives of this project are to remove hardened armoring rock and replace with suitable substrate/shade (large tree plantings) for successful forage fish spawning and to further demonstrate the benefits of soft shore techniques in the protection of beachfront in the face of sea level rise and increased storm erosions. Engineering work and a monitoring plan for physical properties of the new beach is being completed by Coastal Geologic Services. The new beach elevation will be slightly higher than current conditions. A segment of the project area is located within a registered archaeological site. The Samish Indian Nation Tribal Historic Preservation Office will provide monitoring. Archaeology work will be conducted by

Jackie Ferry, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer and State Certified Archaeologist for the Samish Indian Nation. The permitting process is currently underway. In addition, the facilities manager for the Fidalgo RV Park has been communicating with Doug Thompson with the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) regarding the possibility of redesigning the boat ramp. The boat ramp redesign would be a separate project paid for with funding from the resort, not SRI funds. The Samish Indian Nation recognizes that sea level rise will have a major impact on the Fidalgo Bay RV Park. They are in the process of developing an “abandonment plan” to eventually relocate the Fidalgo Bay RV Park facilities further upland.

#### Administrative Report, Tracy Alker:

- **2015-2016 MRC Grant:** The new grant agreement finally got signed this week. The grant has a start date of October 1, 2015 and expires on September 30, 2016. The corresponding sub-award agreements have been drafted and are currently under review. Because of the holidays, the sub-awards won't likely get signed until mid-January, 2016, but they will be ratified to have a start date of October 1, 2015.
- **2015 - 2016 MRC Grant Progress Reports:** Due January 8, 2016. Please report your volunteer hours.
- **2016 - 2017 Project Planning:** It's time to start thinking about project proposals for the 2016-2017 MRC grant funding. New project proposals will need to be approved at the March 10, 2016 MRC meeting. MRCs will be asked to present one of the new project proposals at the April 29, 2016 NWSC meeting.
- **MRC Presentation to the County Commissioners:** Jay and Jamey presented the Skagit MRC's 2015 annual report to the County Commissioners on Monday, November 16, 2015 at 10:30 a.m. Jay presented the history and overview of the NWSC, NWSF, MRCs, and highlighted some of the projects he has been involved in. Jamey presented the 2015 MRC project highlights, accomplishments, and the MRC's 2015-2016 workplan. There were a few questions and concerns regarding some of our projects. Unfortunately, there just wasn't enough time to provide a lot of detailed information about our projects in the allotted 25 minutes. Tracy will provide some additional clarification in the updated annual report that will be provided to the Commissioners and posted on the MRC website. Tracy thanked Jay and Jamey for doing such an excellent job presenting our work. Pete suggested following up with a presentation on just one or two of our projects so that the Commissioners will have a better understanding about the projects and won't feel overwhelmed with too much information. He also suggested giving a presentation to the Anacortes City Council as well.

#### Project Status & Discussion

- **Salish Sea Stewards/Beach Naturalists, Morty Cohen:** Catherine Buchalski, the Coastal Volunteer Partnership's Volunteer Coordinator will be leaving her position mid-January, 2016. The position was advertised and around 35 applications have been received. Morty and Paul will be involved in screening and interviewing the applicants. Morty, Pete, and Tracy will meet with Catherine on December 16<sup>th</sup> to start planning the 2016 Salish Sea Stewards training. The training will incorporate lectures with more hands on field training in the same day or the same week. The training will start in March or April and will likely be more than 40 hours total. Morty requested that MRC members provide a list of projects and activities that will need volunteers.
- **Shannon Point Nearshore Restoration, Paul Dinne!** The Northwest Straits Foundation secured \$50,000 grant funding from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service for permitting and construction. The Foundation will continue looking for additional construction money. Jason is currently in the process of getting back in contact

with the various permitting agencies and landowners (WWU & City of Anacortes) to start the permit process again. The Foundation hopes to know more next week. They will need letters of permission again from WWU and the City before the permit applications can be submitted.

- **Bowman Bay Nearshore Restoration, Jay Lind:** Trimaxx Construction was contracted to do the work. Construction began the week of October 26, 2015 and is mostly complete. A few small repairs will be needed to deal with undercutting at the boat ramp and to move a couple of rocks at the pier that toppled over in the storm. The photos below show the beach erosion that occurred as the result of the storm in November. The beach is already starting to look better just one month later. The Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group held a planting party with school groups on November 18<sup>th</sup>. Additional planting will take place in the spring. The Washington Conservation Crew installed exclusion fencing to protect the plants from people and deer. Jason has been working on the time-lapse video that was setup to film the construction and is adding in the great drone videos as well. They hope to have something ready in a couple of weeks. The tentative date for the ribbon cutting celebration is April 23, 2016.



Planting Party: November 18, 2015



December 9, 2015

- **Fidalgo Bay Day, Pete Haase:** Skagit MRC received an award for the 2015 Fidalgo Bay Day at the MRC conference. Jay presented the award to Kari as the 2015 Fidalgo Bay Day project lead. An article about Fidalgo Bay Day was in one of the publications produced by the Samish Indian Nation. Planning for the 2016 Fidalgo Bay Day is currently underway. A Fidalgo Bay Day debrief/planning meeting was held November 16, 2015. The Fidalgo Bay Resort has been reserved for August 27, 2016 (11am – 3pm). ‘Save the Date’ cards will be provided at some of the upcoming events such as the Youth Summit at Padilla Bay and Storming the Sound in La Conner.
- **Olympia Oyster Restoration, Paul Dinne:** Not much going on this winter. Monitoring results from earlier this fall indicated that the level of new oyster settlement was very strong. The shell plots on the east side of Fidalgo Bay, especially the ones on the southern end, had very high oyster settlement rates. However, there is some concern regarding future survival rates of the shell plots due to high levels of sedimentation. Additional seeding will take place this summer at Cap Sante. Monitoring sensors and four bags of native oyster seed will also be deployed in the recently restored channel/marsh system at Secret Harbor. Paul proposed that the MRC consider using SRI funds to distribute 5-10 cubic yards of oyster shell on private property located to the west of the trestle to increase the distribution of native oyster settlement. With consensus from the MRC, Paul will seek written permission from the property owner. Paul has been working collaboratively with a group in California to prepare and co-author a paper for a publication on native oyster recruitment patterns from California to British Columbia. He recently received copies of this new publication “[Guide to Olympia Oyster Restoration and Conservation.](#)” Hard copies were given to the MRC library and the NWSC library. The new guide includes the oyster restoration work in Fidalgo Bay.
- **Pinto Abalone Restoration, Paul Dinne:** Monitoring was supposed to start in October, but was postponed due to a delay in getting a signed contract. The Puget Sound Restoration Fund received funding from WDFW to go ahead and start the monitoring work until the funding from the MRC grant becomes available. Paul worked with the Puget Sound Restoration Fund to update the 2015 final report.
- **Shoreline Landowner Workshop, Betsy Stevenson:** The NWSF has grant funding to do a Shoreline Landowner Workshop and property consultations in Skagit County this spring. We will need to start pinning down a date and location for the spring workshop. Kari suggested having it near the Similk Bay and Dewey Beach area where there are a lot of bulkheads on private properties. Jay pointed out that thanks in part to Betsy, one of the landowners who attended the last workshop is now interested in removing the bulkhead from the property they just purchased at Similk Bay. There are also a couple of people from Guemes Island who Lisa has been communicating with who are also interested in potentially removing bulkheads. Jim Johannessen from Coastal Geologic Services will schedule site visits with them again to discuss risk and opportunities. Jamey suggested inviting Phil Dionne from WDFW to talk to the private property owners about monitoring their beaches for forage fish eggs before and after bulkhead removal.

- **Nearshore Monitoring, Jamey Selleck:** The beach seining that was originally scheduled in December was canceled due to the storm that brought in a lot of ulva. The Northwest Straits Foundation applied for a new seining permit that recently expired. A beach seining training will be held sometime in January. The NWSF received funding from Tesoro (\$4,500) to support monitoring in Fidalgo Bay which will help to stretch the SRI funds that were set aside for long-term monitoring a little longer.

#### Miscellaneous Events and Announcements:

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- **Storming the Sound:** January 28, 2016 from 8:30am to 4:30pm at Maple Hall in La Conner. For more information: [www.padillabay.gov/storming](http://www.padillabay.gov/storming).
- **Particularly Sensitive Sea Area Designation:** Friends of the San Juans initiated the process of designating the Salish Sea as a [Particularly Sensitive Sea Area \(PSSA\)](#). A consultant has been hired to help with the application process. The Samish Indian Nation provided funding for the [Feasibility Report](#) in 2014. A PSSA designation requires that at least one of the following criteria must be met: the area must demonstrate ecological, cultural, or educational value. The Salish Sea meets all three criteria. A PSSA designation will allow specific measures to control the maritime activities of large international shipping vessels in that area. The PSSA will be one of the topics at the upcoming Salish Sea Conference in Vancouver B.C.
- **Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve Signage:** A new sign about the Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve is now displayed across from the golf course along Highway 20.

**The meeting adjourned at 11:10 AM. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, January 14, 2016, at the Skagit County Administration Building in Mount Vernon.**