



SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the **January 14, 2016** 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, Julie Barber Todd Woodard, Morty Cohen, Jamey Selleck, Betsy Stevenson, Sarah Tchang, Paul Dinnel, Tim Manns (Kari Odden's MRC Alternate)
- **MRC Members Absent:** Liz Lovelett, Nathan Biletnikoff, Kari Odden
- **Others Attending:** Sharon Riggs, Padilla Bay NERR; Pete Haase (Morty Cohen's MRC Alternate); Phyllis Bravinder; Erica Pickett, City of Anacortes; Craig Olson; Erin Lietzan, DNR; Birdie Davenport, DNR Aquatic Reserves

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 December 10, 2015, MRC meeting minutes were approved as written.

Public Comments: No public comments

Fidalgo Bay Causeway Removal/Replacement Proposal, Birdie Davenport:

WA Department of Natural Resources is working with the Samish Indian Nation and the City of Anacortes to keep this project moving forward and is currently seeking letters of support from other potential partners including Skagit MRC.

Action Item: Birdie will send bullet points to help the MRC draft a letter of support. The Samish Indian Nation completed a [Feasibility Study](#) in 2008 and Western Washington University students published an [Environmental Impact Assessment](#) in 2009. An Interagency Agreement is now in place for the WDNR's Aquatics Division to work with the City of Anacortes on a long term restoration plan for Fidalgo Bay. A work session with the City of Anacortes City Council will be held [February 8th](#) at the Anacortes City Hall at 6:00pm and is open to the public. A written project proposal and project fact sheets will be developed and made available after the work session with the City. WDNR recently hired an engineering firm to do cost estimates with a 20% contingency for three phases:

Phase 1: Design Phase (~\$790,000)

Phase 2: Trestle Removal/Replacement (~\$8.8 million)

Phase 3: Causeway Removal/Replacement (~\$12.5 million)

WDNR is currently seeking funding for this project. They submitted a Near Term Action proposal and also met with the US Fish and Wildlife Service about potential funding. Skagit MRC could consider providing the interpretive signage and citizen science monitoring to help support this project. WDNR currently has a grant to help citizen science and outreach for the aquatic reserve.

Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Report, Jamey Selleck:

The last NWSC meeting was held, December 4, 2015 WebEx, just before the last MRC meeting.

- **NWSC & NWSF Retreat:** The retreat will be held [February 25th and 26th](#) at Padilla Bay. Two representatives from each MRC are invited to attend. Jay will be attending as a Northwest Straits Foundation board member. Jamey will be attending as the Skagit MRC representative on the NWSC. There is still room for one more Skagit MRC member to attend. **Action Item:** Please let Tracy or Jamey know if you are interested in attending the retreat.
- **Local Integrated Organization (LIO):** Although the Skagit MRC does not intend to take on the role of establishing a LIO, there have been a lot of questions and concerns about future funding if one is not established. Jamey reported that he recently met with Leah Kintner with the Puget Sound Partnership to continue the conversation about LIOs. Leah has agreed to attend the MRC meeting in February to address some of the questions and concerns that came up at the December MRC meeting. **Action Item:** Please let Tracy know if there are any specific questions you would like Leah to address. Jamey pointed out that there is no longer funding available from the Puget Sound Partnership to establish an LIO in Skagit County. However, there is still some funding available to sustain an LIO, but time might be running out for that funding too. Jamey noted that the fiduciary

agent for the LIOs doesn't necessarily have to be the County. The fiduciary agency could be a tribe, a non-profit, a consultant, etc. The LIO coordinator can be outsourced if the fiduciary doesn't have the staff capacity. There also needs to be an Executive Committee with just a few local representatives including: a county official, a tribal representative, and a Watershed Council representative. A board of directors can be established to oversee the Executive Committee.

- **Cross MRC Integration:** One of the main topics that came out of the MRC conference was how the MRCs can become more integrated with the other county MRCs to share project ideas and resources. The NWSC plans to release a schedule of all of the MRC meetings so that MRC members will have an opportunity to attend some of the other MRC meetings.
- **Salish Sea Eco-System Conference April 13 – 15, 2016 in Vancouver, B.C.:** The NWSC has offered to help pay the \$395 registration fee for at least one MRC member from each MRC to go to the Salish Sea Eco-System Conference. Priority will be given to those who are presenting and need assistance to pay for the conference. The NWSC will make a decision by February 5th. The Skagit MRC also has a small travel budget to help cover costs for mileage and lodging. Jamey announced that he is planning on going as a presenter and would like to be considered for funding assistance if available. **Action Item:** Please let Tracy know if anyone else is interested in going to the conference and needs assistance in covering the costs as soon as possible.
- **Next NWSC Meeting Friday, January 29, 2016** in Island County.

Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) Report, Jay Lind:

- **NWSF Executive Board:** A board meeting will be held next week.
- **Silent Auction:** The silent auction was canceled at the MRC conference this year due to some concerns expressed by attendees who were feeling pressured to buy something. The NWSF plans to have a special fundraiser event sometime this spring, so stay tuned.
- **NWSF Funding:** Caroline Gibson, the Executive Director, has been busy looking for 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, so stay tuned.
- **Rose Foundation Funding:** The Rose Foundation has some funding available for water quality or restoration projects which could also include a public education and outreach and hands-on stewardship activities component. Jay suggested the MRC consider pursuing this funding to help support the Salish Sea Stewards. Although it can't be used to fund the general Salish Sea Stewards training, it could be used to fund part of the training that focuses on water quality/monitoring and nearshore restoration/monitoring. **Action Item:** Jay will contact Joan to find out if the Salish Sea Stewards would be a good fit for this funding.
- **Near Term Action (NTA) Proposals:** The NWSF worked with the Skagit MRC to submit NTA proposals for the Puget Sound Partnership Action Agenda update for Shannon Point nearshore restoration, Bowman Bay planting and maintenance, and a feasibility study to see if the marsh at Bowman Bay could be connected to the salt water. In addition, the Foundation also submitted a regional NTA for the Shoreline Armor Reduction Program (SHARP) for all of the MRCs. Over 400 NTAs have been received and will need to be reviewed. The first reviews of the submittals are supposed to be happening around January 18th. But due to the large number of NTAs they received, there will likely be a delay getting the results.

Administrative Report, Tracy Alker:

- **2015 - 2016 MRC Grant Deliverables:** Grant deliverables were due January 8, 2016. All of the deliverables were submitted on time except for the annual report. It is anticipated that the annual report will be completed by January 31, 2016. The project leads will be asked to review. Tracy thanked MRC members for reporting their volunteer hours and providing project updates.
- **Annual Work Plan Update:** The Annual Work Plan was updated and emailed to MRC members for review. The revised document will be emailed in a printable format. The Work Plan will have to be updated again when the 2016-2017 project proposals are finalized and grant deliverable deadlines are known.
- **2016 - 2017 Project Planning:** It's time to start thinking about project proposals for the 2016-2017 MRC grant funding. The following is the estimated timeline:
 - **March-** Request for Proposals. MRCs draft project proposals.
 - **April-** Finalize project proposals. MRCs present one project proposal at the April 29, 2016 NWSC meeting at Padilla Bay.
 - **May-** Project proposals due.

- **Oct 1, 2016-** new grant begins.

Action Item: Tracy will email the spreadsheet with current projects and criteria to consider for ranking the projects. MRC members will need to determine whether or not we want to develop project proposals during the regular business meetings or schedule a retreat. The NWSC and NWSF offered to facilitate the MRC retreats to help with short term and long term project planning. The first step will be to decide if we want to continue with some or all of the current projects. The second step will be to determine if we want to keep the same budget for each project or if the budget needs to be modified. The third step will be to identify potential new projects, prioritize all projects, and identify potential projects that could be funded by other sources.

- **Crab pot Strategy Development.** The NWSF is trying to organize an advisory committee of stakeholders to develop a comprehensive strategy to minimize harm from derelict crab pots in Puget Sound. Tracy thanked Jay and Todd for volunteering to participate on the advisory committee. The NWSF hired Veda Environmental to help facilitate the process. A meeting is planned for March. The NWSF is working on a draft strategy in anticipation of the meeting and is also putting together a lot of materials for the advisors prior to the meeting. The idea is to have it ready before the summer recreational crabbing season. The NWSF also has funding from NOAA to develop some educational tools for recreational crabbers.
- **Crabber Outreach Photo/Poster Contest (#CatchMoreCrabSnoCo):** This project was initiated by the Snohomish MRC to help bring awareness to the proper way to rig crab pots to reduce the number of derelict crab pots. Snohomish MRC members created posters and businesses cards and put an article in the local newspaper to help promote the contest. MRC members approached around 600 recreational crabbers at the boat launch on the first day of crabbing season. Recreational crabbers were asked to take photos of their rigged pots and of themselves crabbing and post the photos on Instagram with one of the tip hashtags. Over 100 people participated. Snohomish County Public Works provided funding for the prizes. In addition, they also had a poster contest at one of the local elementary schools. The NWSC would like to expand this to other MRCs as a regional effort. The NWSF could seek donations for prizes. Skagit MRC would need to help promote the contest and recruit volunteers to reach out to recreational crabbers at a popular boat launch or where crabbers purchase licenses.
- **Skagit Valley College Forum:** Claus Svendesn is teaching a new course in natural resources policy analyses (ENVC 412) at Skagit Valley College. He is putting together small forums of resources entities. The intent is to highlight the multitudes of natural resource entities working on improving the environment and illustrate how they try to influence policies and actions on the ground. Claus invited the MRC to participate in one of the forums that will also include representatives from the Puget Sound Partnership and the Skagit Watershed Council. Each participant will be asked to provide an introduction about their organization followed by some Q & A. Claus would ahead of time provide some questions for the participants to address in the initial presentation. This forum is scheduled for Thursday, February 11 at 1:30. **Action Item:** Please contact Tracy if you are interested in participating on the forum as a representative of the Skagit MRC.
- **MRC Chair/Vice Chair:** Per consensus of the MRC, Jay Lind will continue for a second term as MRC Chair and Jamey Selleck will continue for a second term as MRC Vice-Chair and NWSC Representative.
- **Todd Woodard's Alternate:** Todd recommended that Jodi Bluhm be appointed as his alternate on the MRC. Per consensus, the MRC will make the recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to appoint Jodie as Todd's alternate. There were no objections. Jodi will attend the February 11th MRC meeting as Todd's alternate since he will not be available.

Project Status & Discussion

- **Salish Sea Stewards/Beach Naturalists, Morty Cohen:** Catherine Buchalski, the Coastal Volunteer Partnership's Volunteer Coordinator is leaving her position the end of January, 2016. Over 35 people applied and five were interviewed for the Volunteer Coordinator position. The position was offered to Samantha Russell. Samantha has a BS in Environmental Science, with a major in marine ecology from WWU Huxley College and has five years of experience. Paul thanked Terry Stevens for all of the work he put into the hiring process. Planning for the 2016 Salish Sea Stewards training is currently underway. The training will incorporate lectures with more hands on field training in the same day or the same week. The training will be held Tuesdays starting in March and will likely be more than 40 hours total. We will start advertising soon. MRC members will be asked to teach some sessions and to provide a list of volunteer needs. A Near Term Action proposal was not submitted for the Salish Sea Stewards because there didn't seem to be a clear fit for any of the three strategic initiatives (i.e. Prevent pollution from stormwater; Protect and restore habitat; and Recover shellfish beds).

- **Shannon Point Nearshore Restoration, Paul Dinne!** Jason Morgan has been working with the various partners and landowners to restart the permitting process. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is currently reviewing the archaeology report from the first design along with the new designs to determine if expanded analysis will be necessary. They determined that no new biological assessment will be necessary. The City of Anacortes will need to make some final determinations on their trail planning as it relates to our new project design before we can submit permit applications. It is anticipated that construction would occur in late fall at the earliest, pending funding. The NWSF has about \$160,000 from WDNR for construction, but additional funding will be needed to get it done. Cost estimate for construction (not including oversight, project management, monitoring, etc) is \$231,000. The NWSF is applying for a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) 5 Star Grant for the project. 5 Star grants require at least 5 partners of varying types. The partners for this grant will be NWSF, MRC with Salish Sea Stewards, City of Anacortes, WWU, Coastal Volunteer Partnership, and USFWS. **Action Item:** The Skagit MRC will provide a letter of support. Paul thanked the Foundation for doing a fantastic job in seeking funding and managing these projects for the MRC. We couldn't have done it without them.
- **Bowman Bay Nearshore Restoration, Jay Lind:** Trimaxx completed the construction in November. They recently went back to the site to make a few minor repairs to deal with the undercutting at the boat ramp from waves and storm action. There were also some rocks at the pier that toppled over during the storm that needed to be readjusted. The Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group held a planting party with school groups on November 18th. Around 100 school kids participated. The Washington Conservation Crew installed exclusion fencing to protect the plants from people and deer. Jason Morgan has been working on the time-lapse video that was setup to film the construction and is adding in the drone videos as well.

The Education and Outreach committee is working on determining the themes for the interpretive signs. One sign will likely be focused on nearshore processes and the impacts of shoreline hardening. The other is in flux and we need ideas, but may include some of the history of the site along with the ecology of the area. Please contact Jay or Tracy if you have any suggestions. The Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group is organizing an Earth Day event at Bowman Bay on April 23, 2016. Some of the activities will include a planting of dune grasses and shrubs, interpretive walks, and forage fish surveys and other monitoring demonstrations. The event will kick off with a screening of the *Maiden of Deception Pass* that will be shown the night before at Padilla Bay on April 22, 2016. Lisa Kaufman suggested recruiting an MRC member and other volunteers to take on the role as stewards of the site. It will involve assisting with monthly planting activities including weeding, maintenance, and monitoring with oversight from the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group. **Action Item:** Please contact Tracy or Jay if you are interested in taking on the lead role as Bowman Bay Steward.

Jay, Lisa, Sue Madsen, and Jason met with Rich Carlson from USFWS at Bowman Bay to look at the potential feasibility of reconnecting the marsh to the bay. Unfortunately, there are too many unknowns for the USFWS to be willing to fund of this project. The NWSF will look into applying for ALEA (Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account) funding in the spring.

- **Fidalgo Bay Day, Pete Haase:** 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 Storming the Sound in La Conner. Unfortunately, it doesn't look like the Shannon Point Marine Center's touch tank will be available for Fidalgo Bay Day this year. The FBD planning committee will need to look into other alternatives. Paul mentioned that the Padilla Bay Foundation is working on raising funds to purchase a permanent touch tank as well as a mobile one, but it might not happen in time for Fidalgo Bay Day this year.
- **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 Skagit Restoration Initiative (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. Native oyster settlement hasn't spread very much to the western side of the bay due to the currents. The sediment in that area is ideal for putting out oyster shell. Paul will work with Jamey to seek written permission from the property owner. The other option for the MRC to consider would be to place shell to the east of the RV Park on tribal lands with permission from Samish Indian Nation.

- **Pinto Abalone Restoration, Paul Dinne:** Monitoring occurred this fall with funding from WDFW. The Puget Sound Restoration Fund recently signed the contract with the county to continue seeding and monitoring later this winter or spring with MRC grant funding.
- **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. Betsy suggested scheduling a workshop in May instead of March to allow more time for planning. **Action Item:** Betsy and Tracy will look into reserving a facility for the workshop near Similk Bay, such as the fire hall, and will contact Jim Johnnessen regarding potential locations for a field trip.
- **Nearshore Monitoring, Jamey Selleck:** The first post-construction Bowman Bay beach seining will occur on Friday, January 15, 2016 at 11am. Shannon Point pre-construction beach seining will start up again soon, thanks to Jay for volunteering his boat. Beach seining training will occur next Friday, January 22, 2016 at Cornet Bay. There are still a few openings. **Action Item:** Please contact Jason Morgan if you would like to attend the training: morgan@nwstraitsfoundation.org.
- **Weaverling Spit Phase 3, Todd Woodard:** A contract was recently awarded to complete the Biological Assessment. The final cost estimate with the contingency plan goes over the budget by \$10,000, but without any contingencies they will be right on target with the budget. The RV Park Facilities has committed to covering the contingency costs if they end up going over budget. Permitting is currently underway. Construction will take place in September. It is anticipated that the construction will go a lot faster than it did for Phases 1 and 2 due to easier access and onsite disposal for the riprap. Planting will take place next year which will allow some time for things to settle and to do some outreach with the RV Park visitors.

Miscellaneous Events and Announcements:

- WDNR Position Announcement- Scientific Tech III
- San Juan MRC is seeking a new Marine Program Coordinator

The meeting adjourned at 11:10 AM. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, February 11, 2016, at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort in Anacortes.



SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the **February 11, 2016** Skagit County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) meeting, held at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort in Anacortes (9:00am to 11:00am)

Attendees:

- **MRC Members Attending:** Tracy Alker, Jay Lind, Julie Barber, Jodi Bluhm (Todd Woodard's Alternate), Morty Cohen, Liz Lovelett, Betsy Stevenson, Sarah Tchang, Paul Dinnel, Kari Odden
- **MRC Members Absent:** Nathan Biletnikoff, Jamey Selleck, Todd Woodard
- **Others Attending:** Sharon Riggs, Padilla Bay NERR; Pete Haase (Morty Cohen's MRC Alternate); Phyllis Bravinder; Erin Lietzan, DNR; Shannon Jones, SFEG; Carlye Nelson, Padilla Bay NERR; Leah Kintner, PSP; Michael See, SCPW; Samantha Russell, CVP; Bridget Trosin, Washington Sea Grant; Ginny Broadhurst, NWSC

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 January 14, 2016, MRC meeting minutes were approved as written.

Public Comments: No public comments

Local Integrating Organization (LIO), Leah Kintner:

Although the Skagit MRC cannot take on the role of establishing a LIO, the committee invited Leah Kintner from the Puget Sound Partnership to answer some of the questions about the structure and benefits of a LIO and potential consequences of not having one. Leah is the Puget Sound Partnership's Ecosystem Coordinator and liaison for Skagit County.

- **What is the purpose of a LIO?** The purpose of a LIO is to provide a central body to help identify local priorities and integrate the three Strategic Initiatives (shellfish, stormwater, and habitat) in the ecosystem recovery as a whole. There are currently nine LIOs throughout the Puget Sound. They are all in the process of developing Five Year Ecosystem Recovery Plans. Skagit County is the only area that does not currently have a LIO. There is \$75,000 annual capacity funding for each LIO. Funding for LIOs comes from the National Estuaries Program (NEP).
- **How are LIOs structured?** The LIO structure varies widely for each location based on local needs. LIOs typically have an Executive Committee with local government and tribal representatives. The Executive Committee is the decision making body. Several different types of working groups or technical subcommittees can be formed under the Executive Committee to review different components of the Strategic Initiatives and Near Term Action Proposals (NTAs), and help develop local priority actions for the Five Year Ecosystem Recovery Plans. A LIO cannot be established without the support of local and tribal governments. The Partnership Leadership Council makes the final decision regarding the proposed LIO structure and function. The EcoNets (Education, Communication, and Outreach Network) are also currently being integrated into the LIOs to help incorporate consistent messaging and marketing strategies for highlighting local priorities and regional strategies.
- **What will the consequences be if a LIO isn't established in Skagit County?** Currently, as a result of not having a LIO in Skagit County, NTA proposals must be submitted through a regional sponsor such as the Northwest Straits Foundation and the Northwest Straits Commission. However, it is still uncertain what the consequences might be in the future if Skagit doesn't form a LIO. The process in 2018 might be completely different than it is now. Not having a LIO or a Five Year Ecosystem Recovery Plan will likely put Skagit at a disadvantage. It will be difficult to get funding without getting projects recognized in the Puget Sound Partnership's Action Agenda which is currently done through the LIO. Without a LIO, Skagit MRC will have less of a voice in identifying local priorities for funding. Michael See, the County Water Resources Section Manager, and the County's Public Works Director, Dan Berentson, plan to meet with the Environmental Protection Agency next month to continue the LIO discussion.
- **When will the Action Agenda update be complete?** The draft Action Agenda update will be ready in September 2016. For more information regarding LIOs and Action Agenda updates go to the Puget Sound Partnership website: www.pugetsoundpartnership.org or contact Leah.

Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Report, Jay Lind:

The last NWSC meeting was held, January 29, 2016 in Island County.

- **Proposed No Discharge Zone Update and Shoreline Armoring Trends in Puget Sound:** Josh Baldi from the Department of Ecology gave updates on establishing a No Discharge Zone for Vessel Sewage in Puget Sound and Trends in Shoreline Armoring. Both presentations are available in pdf format by [clicking here](http://bit.ly/1UM001i) (<http://bit.ly/1UM001i>).
- **Using Light Sensors to Monitor Eelgrass:** Ron Thom introduced a proposal for a project that MRCs can collaborate on to use light sensors to help identify areas where eelgrass will grow and to collect long-term data. For more information go to the WA Department of Natural Resources website: www.dnr.wa.gov/programs-and-services/aquatics/aquatic-science/puget-sound-eelgrass-monitoring-data-viewer or [click here](#).
- **Using Drones to Survey Kelp:** John Githens shared information about his use of drones in kelp monitoring. His presentation is available in pdf by [clicking here](http://bit.ly/1T3O6IN) (<http://bit.ly/1T3O6IN>) and will be forwarded to the Science Advisory Committee for further review.
- **Puget Sound Day on the Hill:** Ginny will attend Puget Sound Day on the Hill in Washington DC from February 29-March 2, 2016.
- **Recreational Crabber Outreach:** The Commission will receive \$50,000 this year from the WA Department of Fish and Wildlife to expand Snohomish MRC's #CatchMoreCrab social marketing campaign to all county MRCs. The purpose is to reduce the loss of recreational crab pots. Recreational crabbing season starts in early July.
- **NWSC Presentation to the Leadership Council:** The Commission will be making a presentation to the Puget Sound Partnership's Leadership Council at their April 28th meeting in Port Townsend.
- **Northwest Straits Commission & Northwest Straits Foundation Retreat February 25th and 26th** at Padilla Bay. Two representatives from each MRC are invited to attend. Jay will be attending as a Northwest Straits Foundation board member. Jamey will be attending as the Skagit MRC representative on the NWSC. There is still room for one more Skagit MRC member to attend. Contact Nicole Jordan if you are interested in attending.

Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) Report, Jay Lind:

- **Near Term Action (NTA) Proposals Update:** Because Skagit County does not have a LIO, NTA proposals for the Puget Sound Partnership Action Agenda update had to be submitted through a regional sponsor. The NWSF was the regional sponsor for the Skagit MRC and submitted NTA proposals for Shannon Point nearshore restoration, Bowman Bay planting and maintenance, and a feasibility study to see if the marsh at Bowman Bay could be connected to the saltwater. In addition, the Foundation submitted a regional NTA for the Shoreline Armor Reduction Program (SHARP) for all of the MRCs. The preliminary reviews have been completed. All of the NWSF's proposals ranked high. The NWSF Staff addressed the comments and questions and resubmitted the proposals. The final ranking list will be ready by February 29, 2016.
- **Next NWSF Board Meeting:** Thursday, February 15th.

Administrative Report, Tracy Alker:

- **2015 MRC Annual Report:** The 2015 MRC Annual Report has been completed and posted on the MRC website: www.skagitmrc.org. Copies of the report have also been provided to the County Commissioners. Please contact Tracy if you would like a hard copy.
- **Skagit Valley College Forum:** The Skagit MRC was invited to participate in one of the forums that Claus Svendsen put together as part of a new course in natural resources policy analyses at Skagit Valley College. The purpose of the forums is to highlight the multitudes of natural resource entities working on improving the environment and illustrate how they try to influence policies and actions on the ground. Tracy thanked Pete Haase for volunteering to participate as the Skagit MRC representative. Leah Kintner from the Puget Sound Partnership will also be participating in today's forum that starts at 1:30 p.m.
- **Free Upcoming Training Opportunities:**
 - Presentation Skills for Scientists and Public Officials Webinar: February 17, 2016 from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.
 - HAZWOPER Training for Oiled Wildlife: February 17, 2016 in Port Angeles and March 19, 2016 in Everett.
 - Shoreline & Coastal Planners Group Forum: March 31, 2016 at 8:30 a.m. at Edmonds City Hall.

MRC Membership Applicants

- **Kit Rawson:** Kari Odden is resigning her position on the Skagit MRC as the representative of the Skagit Land Trust. The Skagit Land Trust recommends appointing Kit Rawson to take Kari's place on the MRC as their new representative. Kit is a scientist and formerly worked for the Tulalip Tribe. He is currently serving on the Board of Directors for the Skagit Land Trust as well as the Sea Doc Society. Prior to that, Kit served on the San Juan MRC for 11 years and was MRC chair for five of those years. Per consensus, the MRC unanimously agreed to make the recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to appoint Kit to the Skagit MRC. There were no objections. Kari will confirm with Tim Manns that he will continue to serve as Kit's alternate on the MRC.
- **Phyllis Bravinder:** Phyllis is a graduate of the 2012 Beach Watcher training and is currently serving as a Board member of the Friends of Skagit Beaches. Phyllis graduated from the University of Washington where she did her senior thesis on "The Importance of the Oceans to Contemporary Civilization". Phyllis worked for many years in teaching education and policy in California and in Africa with the Peace Corps. Per consensus, the MRC unanimously agreed to make the recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to appoint Phyllis to the Skagit MRC. There were no objections.
- **Erica Pickett:** Liz Lovelett requested the Skagit MRC appoint Erica Pickett to be her alternate on the MRC. Erica is a former member of the MRC and currently serves as a City Council Member for the City of Anacortes. Per consensus, the MRC unanimously agreed to make the recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to appoint Erica Pickett as Liz's alternate on the MRC.

2016 – 2017 MRC Grant Project Planning

The 2016- 2017 MRC base funding provided by the NWSC will most likely be for around \$73,000, the same amount as our current budget. This base funding is federal funding from the Environmental Protection Agency via the Puget Sound Partnership through a contract agreement administered by the WA Department of Ecology. The Skagit MRC reviewed the current list of MRC grant funded projects and decided to continue all of the same projects in 2017 including:

- Skagit MRC Operations: \$19,229
- Fidalgo Bay Day: \$3,500
- Salish Sea Stewards: \$18,000
- Pinto Abalone Restoration and Monitoring: \$18,900
- Nearshore restoration monitoring \$10,871
- Olympia oyster monitoring \$0

The project proposals and budgets will need to be refined, but the budgets will most likely be close to the same amount as the current budget for each of the projects except for Olympia oyster restoration. Funding won't be necessary for the Olympia oysters because planting additional oyster seed won't be needed in 2017. The MRC will continue monitoring the Olympia oysters with the help of volunteers. Ginny expressed concern about using Northwest Straits Commission base funding to contract with the Northwest Straits Foundation to do the Nearshore Restoration Monitoring project. The Foundation was established to help seek funding to support the MRC's work, not the other way around. It makes it challenging for the Commission to continue to get funding for the MRC if the work we are doing is perceived as being the Foundation's rather than ours. It will be important for the MRC to figure out a way to have more direct involvement and play a bigger and more active role in owning the projects. Better messaging will also help with perception. Tracy and Jay will meet with Ginny and the Northwest Straits Foundation staff to try to come up with alternative solutions to address the concerns.

Project Status & Discussion

- **Salish Sea Stewards/Beach Naturalists, *Morty Cohen*:** Morty introduced Samantha Russell, the new Coastal Volunteer Partnership's Program Coordinator. Samantha has a BS in Environmental Science, with a major in marine ecology from WWU Huxley College and five years of experience including water quality work in Fiji for the Peace Corps. Planning for the 2016 Salish Sea Stewards training is currently underway. The training will incorporate lectures with more hands on field training on the same day. MRC members will be teaching some sessions and will provide a list of volunteer needs. The classes will be held on Tuesdays at Padilla Bay starting March 15th and will be a little more than 40 hours total. We have already started advertising. The promotional flier and application are available on the MRC website: www.skagitmrc.org. We currently have eight people registered for the class. 25 people attended the training last year so we hope to have another 25 to 30 this year. Liz suggested giving a presentation to the Anacortes Senior College to promote the Salish Sea Stewards program and recruit volunteers. The City of Anacortes Parks Department has a mailer that goes out to all of Anacortes

which would be another great way to promote the training. The next one will be going out in March which might be too late to promote this year's training. The Salish Sea Stewards class will be invited to the April 8th MRC meeting to help give them a better understanding of what the MRC is all about. Morty requested the committee not use so many acronyms during the April MRC meeting. Samantha noted that she plans to provide the class with a list of acronyms as a reference.

- **Shannon Point Nearshore Restoration, Paul Dinne!** The Northwest Straits Foundation is still waiting for the City of Anacortes to make some final determinations on their trail planning as it relates to our new project design before we can submit permit applications. The permit applications are ready to go as soon as the NWSF gets the final word from the City and updated landowner agreements. It is anticipated that construction would occur in late fall at the earliest, pending on the City's final determinations and funding. The NWSF has about \$160,000 from WDNR for construction, but additional funding will be needed to get it done. Cost estimate for construction (not including oversight, project management, monitoring, etc) is \$231,000. The NWSF applied for a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) 5 Star Grant for the project. The partners for this grant will be NWSF, MRC with Salish Sea Stewards, City of Anacortes, WWU, Coastal Volunteer Partnership, and USFWS. The Skagit MRC provided a letter of support to the 5 Star Grant funders. Additional funding will also be needed for planting and plant maintenance over the longer term.
- **Bowman Bay Nearshore Restoration, Jay Lind:** Nothing new to report on the restoration. Lisa will draft a Request for Proposals and Qualifications for an artist to design the interpretive signs and possibly someone to draft the text as well. Lisa is seeking any additional ideas for the second panel. Lisa and Jason met with a video production person to proceed with putting together the time lapse video. Jason will provide the voice-over with details about the site and project. The video will be posted on the NWSF website and provided to the MRC as soon as it is completed. Shannon at Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group continues to work on the Earth Day Celebration that will kick off on April 22nd with a film screening of the *Maiden of Deception Pass* at Padilla Bay. On April 23rd there will be a planting party at Bowman Bay to finish planting dune grasses and shrubs. Other activities will include interpretive walks, and forage fish surveys and other monitoring demonstrations as well as salmon burgers and raffle items. Event fliers will be distributed this weekend at the Island County Sound Waters Conference to start getting the word out. The flier will also be posted on the Skagit MRC website and "The Wave" electronic newsletter.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day, Pete Haase:** The Fidalgo Bay Resort has been reserved for August 27, 2016 (11am – 3pm). The street banner has also been reserved. 'Save the Date' cards were distributed at Storming the Sound in La Conner at will be distributed at the Skagit Valley Forum and has been posted on the Skagit MRC website. Please let Tracy or Pete know if you have any upcoming events and would like to have a few 'Save the Date' cards to distribute. Pete contacted past presenters and participants and invited them to participate again this year. Liz suggested contacting the City of Anacortes Public Works Department or the Anacortes Green Club about bringing an educational display and/or materials on Low Impact Development for homeowners.
- **Olympia Oyster Restoration, Paul Dinne!** Monitoring results from earlier this fall indicated that the level of new oyster settlement was very strong. The four 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 the soft substrate and high levels of sedimentation. Additional seeding will take place this summer at Cap Sante in coordination with Betsy Peabody from the Puget Sound Restoration Fund and the Port of Anacortes. Monitoring sensors and four bags of native oyster seed will also be deployed in the recently restored channel/marsh system at Secret Harbor. Paul is looking at different options to enhance the native oyster restoration effort in the western side of Fidalgo Bay. Native oyster settlement hasn't spread very much to the western side of the bay due to the currents. The sediment in that area is ideal for putting out oyster shell.
- **Pinto Abalone Restoration, Paul Dinne!** Monitoring occurred this fall with funding from WDFW. The Puget Sound Restoration Fund will likely continue seeding and monitoring in March. Additional seeding is necessary to obtain the appropriate densities to accommodate sustainable reproduction. Once a sustainable density is reached at the restoration sites, we should consider monitoring the surrounding areas to see if the pinto abalone population is reproducing naturally and spreading to the surrounding areas.
- **Shoreline Landowner Workshop, Betsy Stevenson:** The NWSF has grant funding to do a Shoreline Landowner Workshop and property consultations in Skagit County this spring. The workshop is tentatively scheduled for Saturday, May 7, 2016. The focus area will be Similk Bay. Betsy plans to look into reserving a facility for the workshop near Similk Bay, such as the fire hall, and will coordinate with Jim Johnnessen regarding potential locations for a field trip.

- **Nearshore Monitoring, Jay Lind:** Beach seining occurred at Bowman Bay on February 9th. Volunteers counted several juvenile chum salmon. The next beach seining monitoring will take place at Bowman Bay on February 19th at 2:00 p.m., March 4th at 10:00 a.m. and March 18th at 10:00 a.m. Beach seining at Shannon Point is tentatively scheduled for February 29th, pending the repair of Jay's boat trailer. Jason is updating the monitoring plans and QAPPs and will have those ready by the end of the month. Beach seining training took place at Cornet Bay on January 22nd. A few new volunteers were trained and will assist in Skagit County.

Miscellaneous Events and Announcements:

- **Skagit County Shoreline Master Program Update:** The Skagit County Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on March 15th at 6 p.m. Skagit County Planning and Development Services will be taking written comments on the draft update until April 4th.
- **Padilla Bay NERR Management Plan:** The Padilla Bay Management Plan is almost ready for public comment. The revised plan will be posted on Padilla Bay's website in the next couple of weeks.

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



SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the **March 10, 2016** 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, Julie Barber, Todd Woodard, Erica Pickett (Liz Lovelett's Alternate), Betsy Stevenson, Sarah Tchang, Pete Haase (Morty Cohen's MRC Alternate), Jamey Selleck (attended by phone), Phyllis Bravinder, Kit Rawson
- **MRC Members Absent:** Nathan Biletznikoff, Morty Cohen, Paul Dinnel, Liz Lovelett
- **Others Attending:** Sharon Riggs, Padilla Bay NERR; Erin Lietzan, DNR; Shannon Jones, SFEG; Bridget Trosin, Washington Sea Grant

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 February 11, 2016, MRC meeting minutes were approved as written.

Public Comments: No public comments

Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Report, Jamey Selleck:

- **NWSC Retreat:** The NWSC & Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) retreat was held February 25th and 26th at Padilla Bay. Jamey and Jay attended the two day retreat and concurred that the retreat was very engaging and worthwhile. Shada Sahandy, the Executive Director of the Puget Sound Partnership (PSP), stayed for the entire retreat. She talked about the role of the PSP and Local Integrating Organizations and the Near Term Action (NTA) proposal process and funding. Some of the other topics discussed at the retreat included new and ongoing projects involving multiple MRCs such as kelp monitoring, shoreline landowner workshops, nearshore restoration and monitoring, etc. They also talked about the different roles of the NWC versus the NWSF. Jamey noted that they will be meeting on Monday to talk about the retreat and will be able to share more information at the next MRC meeting.
- **Salish Sea EcoSystem Conference:** The conference will be held April 13-15, 2016 in Vancouver BC. Skagit MRC members Jamey, Todd, and Julie will be attending the conference.

Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) Report, Jay Lind:

The NWSF is looking to appoint new board members. Caroline has been busy searching for funding. Joan Drinkwin is leaving her position at the Foundation. Instead of hiring someone new to fill her position, Lisa and Jason will be taking on the projects that Joan was working on including the derelict gear program. There has been some discussion about hiring a grant writer. The NWSF and the NWSC are working to develop a recreational crabber outreach program to reduce derelict crab pots before crabbing season starts in July. Jay and Todd are both serving as advisors to help develop a comprehensive derelict crab pot prevention strategy. The next NWSF board meeting will be held the end of March.

Administrative Report, Tracy Alker:

- **Progress Reports DUE April 8th:** Please provide project updates and report your volunteer hours for last quarter (January – March 2016). Tracy will email the report forms.
- **MRC Membership:** It is anticipated that the Board of County Commissioners will sign the resolution officially appointing the new MRC members and alternates next Monday, March 14th. The new MRC members and alternates include: Kit Rawson, Phyllis Bravinder, Jodi Bluhm, and Erica Pickett.

2016 – 2017 MRC Grant Project Planning

The NWSC recently sent out the Request for Proposals (RFP) for MRC projects- FY16. The 2016- 2017 MRC base funding will be around \$73,000, the same amount as our current budget. The NWSC was able to secure this federal funding from the Environmental Protection Agency via the Puget Sound Partnership which will be administered through a contract agreement with the County and the WA Department of Ecology. The MRCs will present one of the project proposals at the April 29th NWSC meeting at Padilla Bay. Final project proposals are due May 31, 2016. The grant start date will be October 1, 2016 through September 30, 2017.

At the February 11th MRC meeting, the committee reviewed the current list of MRC grant funded projects. The consensus was that all of the same projects shall remain a high priority for the FY16 MRC grant funding. The budget for each of the projects shall also remain the same, except for the Pinto Abalone proposal which shall be slightly reduced from \$18,900 to \$16,400. The total cost estimates for the current list of high priority project proposals = \$68,000, which leaves \$5,000 remaining in the budget that can go towards another project. During this meeting, the committee reviewed and ranked the list of new project ideas that fit the RFP criteria and \$5,000 budget. Per consensus, the committee ranked the proposal for the Interpretive Signs at Washington Park in Anacortes as a high priority for FY16 MRC grant funding. Below is the list of project proposals the MRC selected for the FY16 MRC grant funding:

FY16 MRC Grant Project Proposals:

- Skagit MRC Operations: \$19,229
- Fidalgo Bay Day: \$3,500
- Salish Sea Stewards: \$18,000
- Pinto Abalone Restoration and Monitoring: \$16,400
- Nearshore restoration monitoring: \$10,871
- (*New Proposal) Interpretive Signs at Washington Park in Anacortes: \$5,000

Interpretive signs at Washington Park in Anacortes have been highly recommended by the current and past Salish Sea Stewards/Beach Naturalists Coordinators. Beach Naturalists can't always be at the beach, so the signs would be a great way to continue to educate visitors about intertidal marine life and proper beach etiquette. It would also be a great way to increase the visibility of the MRC. The City Parks Department has expressed support of the interpretive signs and is willing to provide sign bases which would help reduce costs. If there is enough funding, the committee members agreed it would be a good idea to install one sign up near the playground area and install a second sign down by the beach. The highest priority would be the sign near the playground area where it would have the most visibility. Nancy Olsen drafted a design and text for the interpretive signs several years ago. Tracy will try to track down the draft design so the MRC won't have to start from scratch. Erica Pickett offered to contact the City of Anacortes Parks Department to find what the City's standards are for interpretive signs to get a more accurate estimate of costs. Jay pointed out that the NWSF recently sent out a RFP for designing interpretive signs at Bowman Bay. The proposals and bids for those interpretive signs could be used as a reference for getting a more accurate cost estimate for the signs at Washington Park. A MRC project lead will need to be assigned. Jay said he would be willing to be the MRC project lead if nobody else can do it.

The following project proposals were also considered but did not rank as high as the interpretive signs for FY16 MRC grant funding:

- MRC Project Highlights Video (\$5,000): The Committee was very interested in this project proposal, but decided that some of the details needed to be ironed out first. It was suggested that the MRC contact the Anacortes High School Green Club or Western Washington University to see if there might be any students interested in taking this on as a project. Skagit 21 might be another option. Skagit 21 created the Car Wash Kit video for the MRC in partnership with the Skagit Conservation District several years ago. The MRC will also need to determine what projects to highlight, if we need to develop a script, and who should be interviewed. In addition, if the MRC wants aerial footage with a drone, we will need to seek permission from the property owners and we will also need to make sure the drone operator is in compliance with current regulations.

- Recreational Crabber Outreach (\$0): This is a regional project with multiple MRCs, the NWSC, and the NWSF. It ranked high and will be included in the workplan, but will not require any MRC grant funding. The NWSC will be receiving \$50,000 this year from the WA Department of Fish and Wildlife to expand Snohomish MRC's #CatchMoreCrab social marketing campaign to all county MRCs. The NWSF also received federal grant funding from NOAA Marine Debris Removal Grant Program for derelict crab pot removal and building local awareness.
- Kayak-Based Kelp Monitoring (\$0): This is a regional project with multiple MRCs, the NWSC, and the NWSF. It ranked high and will be included in the workplan, but will not require any MRC grant funding. Phyllis will contact Lucas to confirm that no additional funding will be needed. The volunteers involved in this project must have their own kayak, life vest, and paddle. The NWSC has survey equipment the MRC volunteers can borrow. The volunteers will be covered under the NWSF liability insurance. The NWSC plans to hire someone to coordinate the kelp monitoring efforts this summer. They also hope to have protocol/GPS trainings in June and possibly some kayak skills trainings as well. The survey protocol revisions will be finalized in May.
- Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) (\$2,000 - \$6,000): ROVs can take live underwater video and still photos and can easily be launched from the shoreline, docks, or boats. A ROV could be used as an educational tool for Salish Sea Stewards and at special events such as Fidalgo Bay Day. It could also be used for surveying kelp, eelgrass, and derelict crab pots. This project didn't rank as a high priority because there were too many concerns about ownership, maintenance, and storage. There were also questions about whether or not a less expensive ROV would function properly and where we would get the funding to pay for repairs if needed. It was suggested that the MRC consider contracting with someone for the use of a ROV for a specific project or event if needed. That way we wouldn't have to worry about maintaining and storing the equipment.
- Kayak-Based Spartina Surveys (\$3,000): Several years ago, Skagit MRC partnered with People for Puget Sound to train volunteers to conduct kayak-based spartina surveys in areas that were hard to reach by foot or by motorized boats. It is not currently clear whether or not there is still a need for kayak-based spartina surveys. It was suggested that the MRC contact the WA Department of Agriculture, the agency leading the effort to eradicate spartina, to find out whether or not there is a need.
- Temporary Shade Planting/Structure at March's Point Restoration Sites: There is concern that the surf smelt eggs aren't getting enough shade during the hot summer months at the March Point nearshore restoration sites. Lisa Kaufman is currently looking into the feasibility of providing some type of temporary shading structure/plantings during the summer months. It is still unclear what type of shading structure/plantings would work at that site, if we could get permits, or if we could get permission from the property owners and the refineries. If it is determined that this project is feasible, Skagit Restoration Initiative (SRI) funding could potentially be used to fund this project.
- Olympia Oyster Restoration (\$0 - \$2,500): MRC grant funding will not be needed for this project since oyster seeding will not be necessary at the Fidalgo Bay oyster restoration sites in 2017. Monitoring will continue with the help of volunteers. Paul is currently looking at different options to enhance the native oyster restoration effort along the western side of Fidalgo Bay. Native oyster settlement hasn't spread very much to the western side of the bay due to the currents. The sediment in that area is ideal for putting out oyster shell. Much of this area is privately owned, so MRC grant funds cannot be used at this location. However, SRI funding could potentially be used. Paul and Jamey plan to contact the property owner to see if there is any interest.
- Speakers Bureau (\$0): Erica suggested the MRC consider forming a speaker's bureau to educate different organizations in the local community about the work of the MRC. There are a lot of organizations out there who have no idea who the MRC is and the work that we do. It's also been about ten years since the MRC presented to the City of Anacortes. Jay and Jamey said they would be willing to present to the City Council this year.

Project Status & Discussion

- **Salish Sea Stewards/Beach Naturalists, Pete Haase**: So far, 18 people have registered for the Salish Sea Stewards training. March 10th is the last day to register. Classes will start next Tuesday, March 15th. Jay will be giving the MRC annual report presentation and Rachel Benbrook, the Whatcom MRC Chair, will be

presenting Puget Sound 101. Classes will be held every Tuesday for ten weeks from 1:00pm to 5:00pm at Padilla Bay. The classroom sessions are open to MRC members and anyone else who is interested. The training schedule has been posted on the [Coastal Volunteer Partnership website](http://www.coastalvolunteerpartnership.org) (www.coastalvolunteerpartnership.org) and will also be posted on the MRC website (www.skagitmrc.org). The Salish Sea Stewards class will be invited to attend the April 14th MRC meeting at Padilla Bay. Morty and Pete requested that MRC members refrain from using abbreviations.

- **Shannon Point Nearshore Restoration, Jay Lind:** The Northwest Straits Foundation is still waiting for the City of Anacortes to make some final determinations on their trail planning as it relates to the new project design. The Foundation has partial funding from WDNR for construction, as long as we can get the project completed during the upcoming fish window. Additional funds are needed for construction. The NTA proposal for this project ranked high.
- **Bowman Bay Nearshore Restoration, Jay Lind:** Restoration work is now complete, except for some additional upland planting and maintenance. A Request for Proposals for the interpretive sign design was sent to 4 or 5 different local artists. Proposals are due March 22. The Bowman Bay Restoration video featuring time lapse of the construction and aerial footage with a drone has been completed and can now be viewed on YouTube and a link has been posted on the Skagit MRC website ([click here](#)). There will be an Earth Day Celebration at Bowman Bay hosted by the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group on April 23rd with a planting party and other activities such as: interpretive stations, and forage fish surveys and other monitoring demonstrations as well as salmon burgers and raffle items, if they are able to secure the donations. The event will kick off on April 22nd with a film screening of the *Maiden of Deception Pass* at Padilla Bay.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day, Pete Haase:** The Fidalgo Bay Resort has been reserved for August 27, 2016 (11am – 3pm). Save the Date Cards have been widely distributed. The planning committee will meet on March 11. The Shannon Point Marine Center touch tanks and Samish canoe rides might not be available this year, so we will need to come up with some new ideas for fun activities. Kari Odden volunteered to lead the kid's activities this year.
- **Olympia Oyster Restoration:** Additional seeding will take place this summer at Cap Sante in coordination with Betsy Peabody from the Puget Sound Restoration Fund and the Port of Anacortes. Monitoring sensors and four bags of native oyster seed will also be deployed in the recently restored channel/marsh system at Secret Harbor. Julie noted that the Swinomish recently secured a donation from a nonprofit organization to purchase 173 bags of oyster shells with Olympia oyster seed to help enhance their native oyster restoration efforts at Lone Tree and Kiket Island lagoon.
- **Pinto Abalone Restoration:** Outplanting of juvenile abalone and monitoring will likely take place at the end of March. Additional seeding is necessary to obtain the appropriate densities to accommodate sustainable reproduction.
- **Shoreline Landowner Workshop, Betsy Stevenson:** The NWSF has grant funding to do a Shoreline Landowner Workshop and property consultations in Skagit County this spring. The workshop is scheduled for Saturday, May 7, 2016. The focus area will be Similk Bay. We are still looking for a venue.
- **Nearshore Monitoring, Jamey Selleck:** The next beach seining monitoring will take place at Bowman Bay on March 18th at 10:00 a.m. Beach seining took place at Shannon Point on February 29th, thanks to Jay and his boat. Jason updated the monitoring plans and QAPPs. Surf smelt eggs were found in the samples at March's Point in January. It was a little unusual because surf smelt are typically summer spawners. Phill Dionne with the Washington State Department Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) will be creating a map that identifies forage fish survey sites of interest within MRC jurisdictions. These sites will represent areas where WDFW would like surveys completed one time per month (referred to as "Index Sites"). MRCs may also suggest additional sites of interest if they wish. Further trainings may be scheduled depending on the level of interest.
- **Weaverling Spit Phase 3 Update, Todd Woodard:** Todd reported that there was a minor setback with permitting, but there should be enough time to go through the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and secure the permits before the construction. Construction is scheduled to start the second or third week in September 2016. The lowest bidder has been selected.

Miscellaneous Events and Announcements:

- **Skagit County Shoreline Master Program Update:** The Skagit County Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on March 15th at 6 p.m. Skagit County Planning and Development Services will be taking written comments on the draft update until April 4th.
- **Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR) Management Plan:** The Padilla Bay Management Plan has been updated and is now open for public comment. The Draft 2016 plan has been posted on Padilla Bay's website: <http://www.padillabay.gov/pdfs/MgtPlanDraftFeb22.pdf>
- **Puget Sound Partnership NTA Open House:** Tuesday, April 12 from 5 to 7:30 pm at the Best Western Plus, 2300 Market St, Mt. Vernon.
- **Friends of Skagit Beaches Lecture Series:** The next lecture is "Sea Otters: A Natural History", presented by Jane Watson on Friday, March 18th from 7:00pm to 8:00pm at the Northwest Education Service District Building in Anacortes. On Friday, April 8th the lecture will be "Restoration of the Elwha River and its Estuary" presented by Ian Miller. For more information go to the Friends of Skagit Beaches website: www.skagitbeaches.org.
- **Cornet Bay Planting Party:** Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group is hosting a planting party at Cornet Bay on March 19th from 10:00am to 1:00pm.

The meeting adjourned at 10:45 AM. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, April 14, 2016, at Padilla Bay.



SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the **April 14, 2016** Skagit County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) meeting, held at the Padilla Bay NERR Interpretive Center Meeting Room (9:00am to 11:00am)

Attendees:

- **MRC Members Attending:** Tracy Alker, Jay Lind, Liz Lovelett, Sarah Tchang, Kit Rawson, Nathan Biletnikoff, Morty Cohen, Paul Dinnel
- **MRC Members Absent:** Julie Barber, Todd Woodard, Jamey Selleck, Phyllis Bravinder, Betsy Stevenson
- **Others Attending:** Sharon Riggs, Padilla Bay NERR; Bridget Trosin, Washington Sea Grant; Sasha Horst, NWSC; Nicole Jordan, NWSC; Samantha Russell, CVP; Pete Haase (Morty Cohen's MRC Alternate); Rich Carlson, USFWS

Call to Order and Introduction: Jay Lind called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and opened the meeting with introductions.

Approval of Minutes: The March 10, 2016, MRC meeting minutes were approved as written.

Public Comments:

- **March's Point Shellfish Harvest Area Closure:** Paul Dinnel requested that someone from the WA Department of Health be invited to our next MRC meeting to talk about why the shellfish harvest area along the eastside of March's Point was recently closed, what needs to be done to get it re-opened, and what the MRC can do to help. We have a lot of great volunteers who would probably be interested in collecting samples.
- **Puget Sound Partnership's (PSP) Action Agenda Update/NTA Proposals Open House:** Jay Lind and Pete Haase recently attended the PSP open house in Mount Vernon. PSP representatives were there to help answer questions, but did not provide any type of presentation or introduction. There were nine tables set up with posters and lots of detailed material about the Action Agenda update, Near Term Action (NTA) proposal ranking, and how to comment. Jay and Pete did not feel that the open house was very helpful.
- **March's Point Heronry:** Samantha Russell expressed concern regarding the potential impacts the upcoming refinery protests might have on the March's Point heronry. It is important to make sure that the protest organizers are aware of the heronry and will avoid the area to protect the nesting birds. The Skagit Land Trust owns and manages the land where the heronry is located. Kit said that he will share the concerns with the Skagit Land Trust at the board meeting this evening.

Washington Sea Grant Program, Bridget Trosin:

The Washington Sea Grant program (WSG) is one of 32 Sea Grant programs located in every coastal and Great Lakes states throughout the country. Sea Grant Programs are administered by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in partnership with universities and other large research institutions. WSG is based at the University of Washington College of the Environment in Seattle, but also has many extension agents strategically located in satellite offices all over western Washington to help cover a wider area. The WSG education department is located in the Seattle office and primarily focuses on K-12. They have a science camp for younger kids and a competitive Orca Bowl for High School students. In addition, WSG provides fellowships for students to strengthen their research and policy skills.

WSG collaborates with scientists, educators, non-profits, government agencies, tribes, and industry on a wide variety of marine-related research and education projects. WSG's project portfolio is based on local needs in areas ranging from coastal management, ecosystem health and fisheries research to shellfish and aquaculture. WSG focuses on improving marine science literacy by disseminating scientific research and the understanding of marine issues down to the local level. They support a wide range of classes, workshops, and special events for the marine industry and community members. One example is the Clean Vessel Act- Pumpout Program that WSG manages in partnership with Washington State Parks. The program educates recreational boaters about the importance of

proper sewage disposal, pumpout station locations, advises mobile pumpout services, and helps marina operators secure grants to install more pumpout stations. In addition, WSG provides clean vessel kits to recreational boaters. WSG also manages several projects that involve citizen science volunteers including:

- Green Crab Monitoring: WSG is working with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and other partners to establish a volunteer monitoring program and outreach campaign in Puget Sound. Volunteer training recently took place at the Kukatella Reserve with 11 participants.
- Witness King Tides: The public is invited to capture and share images of shorelines that are impacted by sea level rise during king tides. Photos will be compiled to compare normal tides with king tides and climate change models. The photos will be used as an educational tool to show the potential impacts of sea level rise due to climate change. WSG is also currently working on a handbook for homeowners to prepare for coastal hazards.
- State of the Oyster Study: WSG trains waterfront property owners to collect samples of clams and oysters to be tested for *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* and fecal contamination four times a year. WSG works closely with the property owners to identify the sources of contamination and possible solutions.

Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Report, Jay Lind:

- Salish Sea EcoSystem Conference (April 13-15): Skagit MRC members Jamey, Todd, and Julie are attending the conference in Vancouver BC this week.
- Next NWSC Meeting (April 29): MRCs will be presenting project proposals on Friday, April 29 at Padilla Bay. Jamey will be presenting Skagit MRC's Nearshore Monitoring project proposal. All MRC members are encouraged to come and show their support and learn about what the other MRCs are proposing.
- 2016-2017 MRC Project Proposals (May 31): NWSC staff is offering to provide guidance to MRC members for upcoming project proposals.

Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) Report, Jay Lind:

- Board Member Recruitment: The NWSF is looking to appoint new board members. They will be interviewing two potential candidates in the next couple of weeks. Contact Jay if you know anyone who might be interested.
- Fundraising: Caroline has been busy searching for new sources of funding.
- Derelict Crab Pot Prevention: The NWSF and the NWSC are working to develop a recreational crabber outreach program to reduce derelict crab pots before crabbing season starts in July. Jay and Todd are both serving as advisors to help develop a comprehensive derelict crab pot prevention strategy. Jay will have a crab pot display at the Anacortes Waterfront festival.

Administrative Report, Tracy Alker:

- Hard copies of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's "Your Marine Waterfront" guides and the 2015 NWSC Annual Report were distributed. Contact Tracy if you did not get a copy and would like one.
- Grant Progress Reports – The grant progress reports and deliverables have been submitted. Tracy thanked the MRC members for submitting project updates and reporting volunteer hours.
- MRC Orientation Packet – The MRC Orientation Packet has been updated for new members. Contact Tracy if you would like a copy.
- MRC Staff Conference Call Highlights:
 - **Logos**: The MRC Logo and logos of our funders (PSP, EPA, NWSC) must be included on all MRC granted related promotional materials and reports
 - **Subaward Agreements**: MRCs that have Subaward Agreements with non-profits must clearly define MRC's role and identify any funding leveraged, supplies, equipment, etc. that will be used to help support the project. It's important to show that it is an MRC project and not pass through funding for another organization's project.
 - **#CatchMoreCrab Campaign**: NWSC received funding from WDFW to expand Snohomish MRC's #Catch More Crab campaign (an instagram contest) to other county MRCs. NWSC posted a job announcement to hire someone to take the lead and work with other interested MRCs on this effort.

- **Clallam MRC Internship Program:** Clallam MRC hired five interns through a local non-profit organization to work on specific topics. The interns were paid \$15/hr for 40 hours. At the end of the program, they each created a poster and presented their projects to the MRC. Clallam MRC is considering hiring fewer interns so they can work more hours.
- **Estuary & Salmon Restoration Program (ESRP) Small Grants Pilot Program** – This new small grants pilot program is specifically for MRC nearshore restoration and protection projects, but other organizations may also apply. The projects must support the MRC Strategic Plan and must include a Strategic Plan Review Form from the MRC. Forms must be signed by the MRC Chair. The \$50,000 to \$100,000 grant requires a 30% match (cash or in-kind services). **Proposals are due: July 31, 2016.** Work must be completed between July 1, 2017 and June 30, 2019. The consensus of the Skagit MRC was to assign a subcommittee to develop and review project proposals. Jay, Tracy, and Paul volunteered to be on the subcommittee. Paul suggested the MRC look into the possibility of working in collaboration with the refineries to remove or replace the emergency boat ramp located next to the MRC’s NW March’s Point beach restoration site with ESRP grant funds. The boat ramp is currently impeding the movement of sediment.

2016 – 2017 MRC Grant Project Proposals

The MRC project leads are currently in the process of drafting proposals for the following projects. The final proposals are **DUE- May 31, 2016.**

- Skagit MRC Operations (Tracy Alker): \$19,229
- Fidalgo Bay Day (Pete Haase): \$3,500
- Salish Sea Stewards (Morty Cohen): \$18,000
- Pinto Abalone Restoration and Monitoring (Paul Dinnel): \$16,400
- Nearshore restoration monitoring (Jamey Selleck): \$10,871
- Interpretive Signs at Washington Park in Anacortes (Jay Lind): \$5,000

Additional information is still needed for the interpretive signs at Washington Park. Erica will follow up with the City Parks Department to confirm that they are still supportive of the project, what their standards are for interpretive sign designs, and if they are willing to provide sign bases and installation. The purpose of the signs is to help educate visitors about intertidal marine life and proper beach etiquette. Samantha said that the MRC is welcome to use the content from the temporary signs that were created for the Beach Naturalist program at Washington Park.

Liz suggested that the MRC consider looking into the feasibility of installing a bioswale or rain garden at Washington Park to address the drainage issue and reduce stormwater runoff to Rosario Strait as a potential project in the future.

Project Status & Discussion

- **Salish Sea Stewards/Beach Naturalists, Morty Cohen and Samantha Russell:** 24 volunteers signed up for the free Salish Sea Stewards training. Unfortunately, four had to drop out for various reasons. Classes started March 15 and will be held every Tuesday at Padilla Bay until May 17. Some of the topics that have been covered so far include: Puget Sound 101, Skagit MRC 101, Intertidal Monitoring 101, Mussel Watch Program, Skagit County Water Quality, Pollution Identification & Correction & Padilla Bay Watershed TMDL, BEACH Program, History of Padilla Bay, Interpretation Skills & Trail Tales Docent Opportunities, Coastal Geologic Processes, History of Bowman Bay, and Bowman Bay and Shannon Point Nearshore Restoration. The complete schedule is posted on the MRC website ([Click here](#) for the class schedule). Beach Naturalists are a part of the Salish Sea Stewards program. A Beach Naturalist committee meeting will be held April 26 after the Salish Sea Stewards class. Beach Naturalist volunteers will be scheduled to be at Washington Park in Anacortes one day a month from May through October. Unfortunately, the Shannon Point Marine Center’s portable touch tank won’t likely be available for the Beach Naturalists to use at Washington Park this year. As an alternative to help draw more people, the volunteers are working on interpretive stations that will be integrated into the Beach Naturalist’s summer program at Washington Park. The Padilla Bay Foundation is also in the process of purchasing a portable touch tank, but it is unclear when it might become available.

- **Shannon Point Nearshore Restoration, Paul Dinne!**: This project has been put on hold until the City of Anacortes makes their final determinations on their trail planning as it relates to the new project design. They are currently working with a consultant to identify the best route for the trail. The Foundation has partial funding from WA Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) for construction, as long as we can get the project completed during the upcoming fish window. Additional funds are needed for construction. The Near Term Action (NTA) proposal for this project ranked high. Nearshore monitoring continues to collect baseline data before construction.
- **Bowman Bay Nearshore Restoration, Jay Lind:** A Request for Proposals for the interpretive sign design was sent to 4 or 5 different local artists. Proposals were due March 22. The artists were ranked but nothing is official yet. The Bowman Bay Restoration video featuring time lapse of the construction and aerial footage with a drone has been completed and can now be viewed on YouTube and a link has been posted on the Skagit MRC website ([click here](#)). There will be an Earth Day Celebration at Bowman Bay hosted by the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group on April 23rd with a planting party and other activities such as: interpretive stations, and forage fish surveys and other monitoring demonstrations as well as salmon burgers and raffle items, if they are able to secure the donations. The event will kick off on April 22nd with a film screening of the *Maiden of Deception Pass* at Padilla Bay.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day, Pete Haase:** The Fidalgo Bay Resort has been reserved for August 27, 2016 (11am – 3pm). Save the Date Cards have been widely distributed. The planning committee met on March 11. The Shannon Point Marine Center touch tanks and Samish canoe rides might not be available this year, so we will need to come up with some new ideas for fun activities. There will be trail tale passport activities along the Tommy Thompson trail and some will also be inside the facility to draw more people in.
- **Olympia Oyster Restoration Paul Dinne!**: 20 bags of oyster seed were recently purchased with Skagit Restoration Initiative funds to expand the native oyster restoration effort at Cap Sante. 10 bags were generously donated by the Puget Sound Restoration Fund. The additional seeding at Cap Sante will take place in May in coordination with Betsy Peabody from the Puget Sound Restoration Fund and the Port of Anacortes. Monitoring sensors and four bags of native oyster seed were recently purchased with Skagit MRC grant funding and will be deployed soon in the recently restored channel/marsh system at Secret Harbor, Cypress Island as an experiment. Paul will also be working with Sharron Riggs to monitor oysters in Padilla Bay. The oysters will be monitored for survival, growth, recruitment, and distribution. Paul plans to continue looking at different options to enhance the native oyster restoration effort in the western side of Fidalgo Bay. Native oyster settlement hasn't spread very much to the western side of the bay due to the currents. Paul hopes to increase oyster settlement in those areas by working collaboratively with the Samish to apply more shell to enhance habitat.
- **Pinto Abalone Restoration, Paul Dinne!**: Paul recently went out with the Puget Sound Restoration Fund crew to monitor pinto abalone at Allen Island, Burrows Island and Cypress Island restoration sites. PSRF has already been out monitoring numerous times. Additional seeding of juvenile pinto abalone will take place next month at Cypress Island. Some of the pinto abalone at the Cypress Island site have been tagged and are being monitored for growth, survivorship and movement of the pinto abalone. They are already finding growth and mobility of the abalone at the sites.
 - **Shoreline Landowner Workshop:** The workshop is scheduled for Saturday, May 7, 2016, from 9:00am to 12:30pm, at the Port's Seafarer's Memorial Park Building in Anacortes. The focus area is Similk Bay. The presenter will be coastal geologist Jim Johannessen. The morning presentation will be followed by a short afternoon beach walk to see beach habitats and geologic processes. So far 18 people have signed up.
- **Nearshore Monitoring:** Monitoring continues at Bowman Bay, Shannon Point, and NW March's Point nearshore restoration sites.

Miscellaneous Events and Announcements:

- **United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS):** USFWS just announced their National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program funding opportunity for FY 2017. Over \$20 million will be awarded to projects that acquire, protect, restore, or enhance coastal wetlands and adjacent upland habitats. All projects must ensure long-term (at least 20 years) conservation. The application deadline is June 29, 2016. Grants will be awarded January 2017. USFWS has a 24' aluminum boat that could be used for

restoration projects if needed, but it would require someone who is certified to drive it. It can also be used as a match for projects.

- Fidalgo Bay Shoreline Academy (May 14, 9am-3:30pm at the Fidalgo Bay Resort in Anacortes): Chris Jordan is the Keynote Speaker. Chris is a well-known photographer and environmentalist. Register online at: <http://skagitbeaches.org/our-work/fidalgo-shoreline-academy.html>

The meeting adjourned at 11:05 AM. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, May 12, 2016, at the Skagit County Administration Building in Mount Vernon



SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the **May 12, 2016** 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, Erica Pickett (Liz Lovelett's Alternate), Sarah Tchang, Nathan Biletznikoff, Morty Cohen, Paul Dinnel, Tim Manns (Kit Rawson's Alternate), Jamey Selleck, Phyllis Bravinder, Betsy Stevenson
- **MRC Members Absent:** Julie Barber, Todd Woodard, Liz Lovelett, Kit Rawson
- **Others Attending:** Samantha Russell, CVP; Pete Haase (Morty Cohen's MRC Alternate); Scott Berbells, DOH; Liz Maier, DOH; Rick Haley, SCPW; Lucas Hart, NWSC

Call to Order and Introduction: Jay Lind called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and opened the meeting with introductions.

Approval of Minutes: The April 14, 2016, MRC meeting minutes were approved with a few minor changes to the miscellaneous announcements section. Tracy will send out a copy of the revised minutes.

Public Comments: None

Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Report, Jamey Selleck:

- Salish Sea EcoSystem Conference (April 13-15): Skagit MRC members Jamey, Todd, and Julie attended the conference in Vancouver BC last month. Jamey chaired several sessions. Jamey said there were a lot of great presentations and discussions that integrated policy, management, and science.
- 2016 - 2017 MRC Project Proposal Presentations: Each MRC presented a proposed project for the 2016-2017 MRC Grant at the April 29th NWSC meeting. Jamey presented Skagit MRC's Nearshore Monitoring project proposal. The NWSC asked about Skagit MRC's role and ownership of the project. Jamey explained that the MRC selects and prioritizes the sites, participates in the actual monitoring, and trains Salish Sea Stewards to help with monitoring. In addition, MRC funds are leveraged with matching funds from the Northwest Straits Foundation. The other proposals that were presented included: "Aiston Preserve: From a Rock Quarry to a Public/private Conservation Partnership" (Whatcom MRC); "Port Susan Shoreline Storm Surge Monitoring" (Snohomish MRC); "Oil Spill Preparedness" (Clallam MRC); "2017 Marine Managers' Workshop" (San Juan MRC); "Olympia Oyster Restoration in Jefferson County" (Jefferson MRC); "A Pigeon Guillemot Survey: Both Monitoring and Outreach" (Island MRC). The NWSC has a four member science technical committee that will help review the proposals.
- 2016 MRC Conference- November 4-5 in Port Townsend: Johnathan White will be the keynote speaker. Planning is underway. Please send ideas for the conference theme, sessions and field trip to Ginny.
- NWSC Officer Elections: Nan McKay was elected to serve another term as Chair of the NWSC. Jamey Selleck was elected Vice Chair. This will require that Jamey continue to be the MRC's NWSC rep beyond the two year term limit requirement stated in the MRC Bylaws. Jamey requested the Skagit MRC consider making an exception to the two-year limit. Per consensus of the MRC, Jamey will continue to serve as the NWSC beyond the two year limit.
- Puget Sound Partnership (PSP) Update: Several NWSC representatives (including Jamey) presented to the PSP Leadership Council in Port Townsend about the work of the NWSC and MRCs. The presentations were well received. PSP did not receive the funding they had expected so they ended up having a budget shortfall of around \$800k. Unfortunately, as a result, they ended up having to let six staff go.
- Next NWSC Meeting – WebEx May 27

Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) Report, Jay Lind:

- NWSC Liaisons: The NWSF assigned liaisons to the NWSC help improve communications.
- Joan Drinkwin Update: Joan officially resigned from the NWSF and is now working for NRC. Joan will continue working as a contractor on the NWSF's derelict crab pot project.
- Derelict Crab Pot Prevention: The NWSF and the NWSC are working collaboratively to develop a recreational crabber outreach program to reduce derelict crab pots before crabbing season starts in July. Jay and Todd are both serving as advisors to help develop a comprehensive derelict crab pot prevention strategy. Jay will host the MRC and crab pot display at the Anacortes Waterfront festival. The NWSC recently received funding from the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife to expand the Snohomish MRC's #Catchmorecrab social media campaign into a regional project for other MRC counties. The NWSC recently hired someone to take the lead to develop and implement the project specific to each county.
- NWSF Meetings: NWSF meets every other month. NWSF officer elections will be held in June.

Administrative Report , Tracy Alker:

- The Skagit County Population Health Trust Advisory Committee (SCPHTAC) Data Dashboard Website: SCPHTAC will be launching a comprehensive data dashboard website this fall that will feature up to 120 different data points. The Committee invited the Skagit MRC to participate in a two hour Environment focus group to make sure the right data is selected. Participation will lead to the final list of environmental indicators that will be published on the website. The Environment Focus Group will take place **June 14, 2016 from 2:00 to 4:00pm**. Participants can register online. Please let Tracy know if you are interested in participating as a representative of Skagit MRC.
- 2016 - 2017 Project Proposals: MRC grant project proposals are due May 31. Tracy will submit the proposals online through the EAGL application process. The NWSC Technical Committee will review and comment on the grant applications.

Estuary & Salmon Restoration Program (ESRP) Small Grants Pilot Program:

This new small grants pilot program is for nearshore restoration and protection projects. The projects must support the MRC Strategic Plan and must include a Strategic Plan Review Form from the MRC and signed by the MRC Chair. The \$50,000 to \$100,000 grant requires a 30% match (cash or in-kind services).

Eligible Project Types:

- Pre-construction planning/design
- Feasibility and/or Design
- Construction
- Restoration
- Project outreach with specific outreach and education components
- Pre and post-construction assessment elements

Small Grants Projects Application Schedule:

- Register for Pre-application site visit: **May 15**
- Pre-application site visits: **June 13-30**
- Online application due: **July 11**
- Proposals due: **July 31**

Per consensus of the Skagit MRC, Jay Lind will contact Sue Madsen with the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group (SFEG) about collaborating on the Bowman Bay Marsh Reconnection project and Paul Dinnel will contact the Swinomish Tribe and State Parks about collaborating on the Kiket Island Riprap Removal/Causeway Restoration project.

Forage Fish & Kelp Surveys Update, Lucas Hart:

- **Forage Fish Surveys**: The NWSC received \$50,000 from Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) for two years of forage fish work. The first half expires on June 30. The remaining \$25,000 will be used to purchase survey equipment that can be used by the MRC volunteers. WDFW identified several index sites where there are data gaps. In Skagit County, the first index site is located in the Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve, just north of the trestle. Pete noted that they are already surveying the surrounding areas, so he will look for an alternative site that might be more beneficial to sample. He also pointed out

that the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) is willing to purchase the survey equipment needed for the Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve sites. The second index site is located at Ship Harbor near the Anacortes ferry terminal where the community beach seining events used to take place. Pete noted that Tracy Powell, one of the new Salish Sea Stewards, is very interested in conducting forage fish surveys at the Kuketali Reserve. WDFW reported spawning there. Skagit MRC will need to find a new Project Lead to take on the additional index sites. WDFW will provide forage fish survey protocol training for volunteers on June 8. Lucas will provide more details as soon as they get all worked out.

- **Kelp Surveys:** The kelp monitoring and safety protocols are currently being revised and will be finalized soon. Lucas will send those out as soon as they are ready. The NWSC is hiring a Kelp Monitoring Coordinator. The Coordinator will be responsible for collecting and managing the data from all of the MRCs and will look at how much variation there is between citizen scientists. The Coordinator will also be responsible for providing kelp survey protocol training, kayak safety training, and outreach materials. A scientist from Wisconsin is conducting a study on kelp genetics and is in need of some samples. He will provide a sampling kit for volunteers who are interested in helping. Phyllis Bravinder volunteered to be the Skagit MRC's Project Lead for the kelp surveys. Although she will not be conducting the surveys herself, she has lined up at least one volunteer who is interested in participating. A minimum of two volunteers will be required for safety reasons. Samantha Russel said that she is interested in helping as well, and noted that the Coastal Volunteer Partnership received a kayak donation that could be used for this project. The Skagit MRC must select at least one or two sites to survey. Lucas said that the Island MRC has a pilot who said he is willing to take aerial photos to help map out good locations to survey. The Washington State Department of Natural Resources also has several maps that are available for the MRC to use as a reference. The use of drones might be considered to help with kelp surveys in the future, depending on regulatory requirements.

Project Status & Discussion

- **Salish Sea Stewards/Beach Naturalists, *Morty Cohen and Samantha Russell*:** 19 newly trained Salish Sea Stewards volunteers will graduate on May 17th. Ginny Broadhurst will deliver the graduation speech which will be followed by a mini Padilla Bay research symposium, a distribution of graduation certificates/Salish Sea Stewards pins, and a potluck celebration. 2016 Salish Sea Stewards training presentations are available through a Dropbox account that Samantha created for the training. Beach naturalists are scheduled to be at Washington Park in Anacortes each month from May through October. The first date is May 21, 10:00a.m. - 1:00p.m. Samantha recommended signing up to receive the Coastal Volunteer Partnership's bimonthly electronic news bulletin, "[The Wave](#)" to receive information about upcoming activities, events, socials, lectures, volunteer opportunities, etc.
- **Shannon Point Nearshore Restoration, *Paul Dinnel*:** This project is still on hold until the City makes a decision about the proposed trail. Additional funding is needed for construction. Pre-construction nearshore monitoring continues.
- **Bowman Bay Nearshore Restoration, *Jay Lind*:** A planting party was held April 23rd. Over 200 volunteers participated. Post-construction monitoring continues. The volunteers learned about native plant identification and proper planting techniques. Other activities included a presentation on the history of Bowman Bay and the recent restoration work, a beach seining demonstration, low tide beach walks, a forage fish spawning survey demonstration, educational displays, raffle prizes and a free salmon burger lunch. Thanks to the local businesses for donations, and thanks to the Skagit fisheries Enhancement Group, the Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF), State Parks, Skagit MRC members, and all of the volunteers who helped to make it all happen.
- The NWSF hired an artist to design the interpretive signs. The artist recently completed the first draft design mockups.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day, *Pete Haase*:** The Fidalgo Bay Resort has been reserved for [August 27, 2016](#) (11am – 3pm). Save the Date Cards have been widely distributed. Planning continues.
- **Olympia Oyster Restoration *Paul Dinnel*:** 24 bags of oyster seed were recently purchased with Skagit Restoration Initiative funds and delivered to the Cap Sante restoration site. MRC members Paul Dinnel and Sara Tchang and a few others distributed the bags. Unfortunately, the seed densities were very low, so additional seeding will be needed. Paul Dinnel is considering collecting a natural set of oysters in Fidalgo

Bay and transferring them along with the new monitoring sensors to the recently restored channel/marsh system at Secret Harbor, Cypress Island. Most of the monitoring will occur in June and July. Paul recently presented the Fidalgo Bay oyster restoration work to the Whatcom MRC.

- **Pinto Abalone Restoration, Paul Dinne!**: Monitoring and seeding are now complete for 2016. Preliminary monitoring results indicate that the abalone at the restoration sites have increased in size and density, enough to start spawning naturally. However, no signs of natural recruitment have been observed. A final report will be provided in September.
- **Shoreline Landowner Workshop**: The workshop was held Saturday, May 7, 2016, from 9:00am to 12:30pm, at the Port's Seafarer's Memorial Park Building in Anacortes. The workshop was sponsored by the NWSF in collaboration with the Skagit MRC. 32 people attended the workshop. Many were Similk Bay shoreline property owners. Skagit MRC Chair Jay Lind provided welcoming remarks. Jim Johannessen with Coastal Geologic Services, presented on erosion management, alternatives to hard shoreline armoring, enhancing beach access, and native vegetation for slope stability and habitat. The presentation was followed by a short afternoon beach walk to see geologic processes and beach habitats. Shoreline property owners could also apply for a free technical site visit from a qualified professional to receive management recommendations. Free engineering design services and permitting assistance are also available for qualified landowners willing and able to remove or reduce hard shoreline armoring.
- **Nearshore Monitoring**: Monitoring continues at Bowman Bay, Shannon Point, and NW March's Point nearshore restoration sites. Pink, Chinook, and chum salmon were captured in small numbers in the beach seine at Bowman Bay. The last seining event had a more diversified catch including two gunnel species, sculpin, and our first adult surf smelt was caught. Shannon Point has been relatively slow, with an exception of one set when 140 pinks and 9 chum were captured.

March's Point Shellfish Harvest Closure Discussion, Scott Berbells:

Scott Berbells, the Growing Area Section Manager with the Washington State Department of Health (DOH), provided an overview of DOH's Shellfish Growing Area program and discussed the recent closure of the east March's Point public beach for recreational shellfish harvest. DOH's Shellfish Growing Area primarily focuses on fecal coliform not heavy metals or other pollutants at public beaches. DOH only evaluates the areas that are mapped as public beaches and recreational shellfish harvest areas. The evaluation process involves the following: a shoreline survey to identify potential pollution sources; marine water sampling to test for fecal coliform bacteria; and an analysis of how weather conditions, tides, and current, and other factors may affect the distribution of pollutants in the area. The evaluation results will be used to determine how the growing area classifications should be assigned. The classification determines whether or not shellfish in the area are safe to be harvested for human consumption. The different recreational beach classifications include: Open, Conditionally Open, Emergency Closure, Closed, and Unclassified. WDFW is the agency responsible for setting the seasons and limits for recreational shellfish harvests.

WDFW's decision to close recreational shellfish harvesting at the east March's Point public beach was based on DOH's recommendation and classification of the site. The site was red flagged by DOH due to a lack of enough water quality data and the potential risk for fecal bacteria contamination from wastewater discharges and nearby agricultural land. Committee members expressed concern over the lack of water quality data. It was noted that the Skagit County Clean Water Program has done some sampling in the east March's Point area, but it has been very limited. The samples that have been tested had high levels of fecal coliform bacteria. The Swinomish Tribe also conducted a marine water quality study in that area several years ago. DOH has been working closely with the tribes and the County and other entities to make sure they have the best data possible for making decisions. MRC members asked if Fidalgo Bay has ever been considered for closure to recreational shellfish harvesting. DOH admitted that Fidalgo Bay hasn't been on their radar because it isn't mapped as a public recreational shellfish harvest area, but will consider evaluating it in the future.

The high number of beach closures is very concerning to the Skagit MRC. The Committee asked what needs to happen to get the March's Point beach back open and if there is anything the MRC can do to help. DOH will need good water quality data. Results must indicate the fecal coliform levels are low enough for the shellfish to be safe to eat before the beach can be reopened. DOH will work with the County to look into the possibility of expanding the County's water quality monitoring program to include sample sites at east March's Point. If it isn't feasible, the MRC could take the lead in collecting water quality samples and send them to DOH for

analysis. DOH will continue to work collaboratively with partners to figure out the next steps to fix the problem.

Miscellaneous Events and Announcements:

- Fidalgo Bay Shoreline Academy (May 14, 9am-3:30pm at the Fidalgo Bay Resort in Anacortes): Chris Jordan is the Keynote Speaker. Chris is a well-known photographer and environmentalist. Register online at: <http://skagitbeaches.org/our-work/fidalgo-shoreline-academy.html>
- Bowman Bay Weeding Party- May 24, 2016
- Dine and Discover Event- June 17, 2016 at Bayview State Park, 4-8pm. Skagit County and the Coastal Volunteer Partnership are co-sponsoring this free, fun, family event to celebrate the Padilla Bay and Samish Bay watersheds. There will be food, music, games, and prizes. Skagit MRC will also be participating with the forage fish bean bag toss game and stormdrain putting game.

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 AM. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, June 9, 2016, at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort in Anacortes



SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the **June 9, 2016** Skagit County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) meeting, held at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort in Anacortes (9:00am to 11:00am)

Attendees:

- **MRC Members Attending:** Tracy Alker, Jay Lind, Liz Lovelett, Sarah Tchang, Nathan Biletnikoff, Morty Cohen, Paul Dinnel, Kit Rawson, Jamey Selleck, Phyllis Bravinder, Julie Barber, Jodi Bluhm (Todd Woodard's Alternate),
- **MRC Members Absent:** Todd Woodard, Betsy Stevenson
- **Others Attending:** Samantha Russell, CVP; Pete Haase (Morty Cohen's MRC Alternate); Sharon Riggs (Padilla Bay NERR); Erin Lietzan, DNR; Kari Odden (Skagit Land Trust); Michael Kirshenbaum (Skagit Land Trust)

Call to Order and Introduction: Jay Lind called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. and opened the meeting with introductions.

Approval of Minutes: The May 12, 2016, MRC meeting minutes were approved as written.

Public Comments:

- **Anacortes Waterfront Festival:** Jay Lind hosted the MRC display at the Anacortes Waterfront Festival last weekend. Jay shared the booth with the Friends of Skagit Beaches, the Coastal Volunteer Partnership, and the Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve Citizen Stewardship Committee. Unfortunately, only a small number of people stopped by. We will need to determine if this is an appropriate venue for the MRC and if there is a better way to attract more visitors.
- **Casey Rice Memorial Service:** Jamey Selleck shared some very sad news about the unexpected passing of Casey Rice. Casey worked at the NOAA Mukilteo Research Station and was well known and admired by many members of the MRCs, Northwest Strait Commission, and Northwest Strait Foundation. A Celebration of Life will be held for Casey this afternoon in Bothell at 2:00pm.

Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Report: *Jamey Selleck*

- **2016 MRC Conference- November 4-5 in Port Townsend:** Johnathan White will be the keynote speaker. Planning is underway. Nicole sent out an online survey with proposed session topics. Additional ideas are always welcome. Contact Ginny if you would like to join the conference advisory committee.
- **Ocean Acidification Workshop:** June 28 in Port Townsend.
- **Puget Sound Partnership (PSP) Update:** Peter Best gave an update on Near Term Action (NTA) funding. The Local Integrating Organizations (LIO) will each receive \$100,000 to implement their NTA projects. Skagit County is not eligible to receive this funding because we do not have an LIO. The draft Action Agenda is now available.
- **#CatchMoreCrab:** The NWSC recently hired Courtney Baxter as the new social media project assistant. She will be working half time through August. Her contact information is baxter@nwstraits.org or 360-399-8170. The Coastal Volunteer Partnership (CVP) volunteers will help distribute educational materials on July 1, the opening day of recreational crabbing. More information will be sent out in the CVP's news bulletin, "[The Wave](#)".
- **Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSA):** Stephanie Buffum, Friends of the San Juans, provided an update on the PSSA designation for the Salish Sea including: requirements, regulatory logistics, and the tentative timeline.
- **Forage Fish Survey Training:** Training was held on June 8, at Padilla Bay. Skagit County Intern, Charlette Turman attended the training in preparation to become the project lead for Skagit MRC's index sites at Ship Harbor and possibly Kiket Island and Bowman Bay.
- **Next NWSC Meeting:** June 24, 10:00am - 3:00pm, at the Snohomish County Administration Building in Everett. Jamey encouraged MRC members to attend NWSC meetings and other county MRC meetings.

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

- **New Kelp Monitoring Coordinator:** The NWSF recently hired Brittany Jones as the new kelp monitoring coordinator. Brittany's contact information is jonebr04@gmail.com or 315-212-5015.

- NWSF Meetings: NWSF meets every other month. NWSF officer and new board member elections will be held today. Jay will likely transition from the Board's Vice President to the Treasurer. They will also be discussing how to establish a stronger sense of unity between the NWSC and the NWSF.

Administrative Report , Tracy Alker:

- 2016 - 2017 MRC Grant Application: The MRC grant application was submitted on May 31. The proposals are currently being reviewed by the NWSC staff and NWSC Science Advisory Committee.
- MRC Grant Deliverables – Due July 8: Quarterly progress reports and volunteer hours are due July 8. Please send any project updates and volunteer hours to Tracy by July 6.
- Swinomish Channel Beach Cleanup- August 6: Per consensus, the MRC accepted the invitation to partner with RE-Sources and the CVP to co-sponsor the beach cleanup along the Swinomish Channel on Saturday, August 6. Samantha noted that the beach cleanup will also be part of the CVP social.

Estuary & Salmon Restoration Program (ESRP) Small Grants Pilot Program Project Proposals:

The ESRP Small Grants Program is a pilot program for two or more nearshore ecosystem restoration and protection projects to be completed between July 1, 2017-June 30, 2019. This pilot program was established in effort to align the MRC and ESRP programs together to generate new community-driven nearshore projects. The project proposals must support the MRC Strategic Plan and must include a Strategic Plan Review Form from the MRC and signed by the MRC Chair. The form is located in the ESRP Small Grants Request for Proposals (RFP). The \$50,000 to \$100,000 grant requires a 30% match (cash or in-kind services). Proposed project actions will be evaluated on project costs and benefits. A competitive review of proposals will result in a ranked project list. **Note: The MRC will not be involved in ranking any of the project proposals. However, the project proposals will be required to include a copy of the MRC Strategic Plan Form signed by the MRC Chair. After the site visits are complete, the MRC will review the proposals at the July 14 MRC meeting to make sure they fit with the MRC's Strategic Plan.* Below is the ESRP Small Grants Projects Application Schedule:

- Pre-application site visits: **June 13 - 30**
- Proposals due: **July 31**

The following ESRP Small Grants Pilot Program proposals were presented at the June 9 MRC meeting:

1. **Bowman Bay Marsh Reconnection**, presented by Sue Madsen from the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group (SFEG): The marsh at Bowman Bay was originally a large back bay wetland, primarily dominated by freshwater from Pass Lake. After the fish hatchery was built, the wetland was developed into several temporary salmon rearing ponds. Overtime, the ponds filled in. There are currently at least two or three undersized culverts buried deep underground allowing some restricted flow of water into and out of Bowman Bay. The culverts frequently get blocked resulting in flooding and high maintenance. SFEG is proposing to open the natural flow to Bowman Bay by removing the culverts and upscaling the existing footbridge and constructing a second footbridge built high enough to allow natural outflow.

The Bowman Bay Marsh Reconnection project is part of the bigger restoration picture for Bowman Bay. SFEG started looking into this project as a potential Chinook rearing habitat about four or five years ago, but decided to put it on hold until after the riprap removal project was complete. During that time, large storms breached the marsh and threatened one of the footbridge pilings. After that, Sue realized that this high energy environment would probably never be good Chinook rearing habitat. She also determined that restoring natural drainage to this site would most likely be a simple project rather than a complex one that would require a feasibility study as she originally thought. Sue will ask the ESRP folks if they think a hydrological study would be necessary during their site visit. It is anticipated that this project would not involve a lot of engineering, just some project design for the footbridges. Tom Slocum indicated that he would be willing to assist with the project design. The hardest part of this project would likely be the permitting. The 30% match requirements would likely come from volunteer labor to build the bridges, planting parties, and monitoring. Donated plants and SFEG's Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA) funds could also be used as a match.

Sue pointed out that the ecological benefits of this project would likely be small, and might not be significant enough to rank very high for ESRP Small Grants funding. However, the cost of this project would also be low. Potential benefits of this project would include: a) increased tidal exchange; b) increased flushing; c) restored natural drainage processes; d) the removal of unnatural material; and e)

reduced maintenance. This project could also potentially improve water quality by increasing flushing and tidal exchange. Water quality from the wetland is currently unknown. SFEG plans to take some water quality samples to determine the current condition. The water is likely to be a little stagnant due to limited exchange of water flowing through the deep culverts. One less expensive alternative that will also be presented during the site visit would be to plug the culverts instead of removing them and install larger footbridges. However, this option could potentially increase erosion, eventually exposing the pipes. Sue will determine whether or not to pursue this project based on the feedback received by the ESRP folks during the site visit. **The site visit will be held June 28th at 10:00am.** An update will be provided at the July 14 MRC meeting.

2. **Fidalgo Bay Shoreline Protection & Restoration**, *presented by Kari Odden and Michael Kirshenbaum from the Skagit Land Trust*: Although it is not a closed deal yet, Skagit Land Trust hopes to acquire a one acre parcel featuring over 1,000' of shoreline along Fidalgo Bay. The property owner decided to donate their property to the Skagit Land Trust because they really wanted to do something to help protect Fidalgo Bay. The property is directly adjacent to two conservation easements held by Skagit Land Trust, including one on the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve. Assuming the acquisition goes through, this project would have two parts: (Phase 1) demolition and removal of an existing home and foundation which is built immediately on the shoreline and partially over the tidelands; (Phase 2) fund a feasibility study and preliminary design for removal of rip-rap and other shoreline modifications that have protected the house to restore natural shoreline structure and function. Skagit Land Trust plans to seek guidance from the MRC and NWSF for their nearshore restoration expertise and hopes the Salish Sea Stewards would be able to help with nearshore monitoring. **The site visit will be held June 22 at 1:00pm.** An update will be provided at the July 14 MRC meeting.

3. **Kiket Island Lagoon Restoration**, *presented by Paul Dinnel from the Skagit MRC*:

The Skagit MRC is proposing to partner with the Swinomish Tribe and Washington State Parks to:

- Restore the Kiket Island intertidal pocket estuary habitat by:
 - Removing the road and fill and replacing it with a trail to the Kuketali Preserve
 - Native plantings along the shoreline
 - Removing ~550 feet of bank armoring to restore nearshore processes and tidal influences
- Protect and restore sediment source beaches in the adjacent drift cells that historically maintained the lagoon spit and tombolo.

The Swinomish Tribe and State Parks own the property and consider this a high priority project. They recently completed the feasibility study and have some funding for permitting which could also be used as part of the 30% match requirement for this project proposal. The Swinomish Tribe owns the tidelands at Kiket Island where one of their native oyster restoration project sites is located. The Swinomish have been monitoring the Kiket Island lagoon and the nearshore for many years and will continue monitoring the site. Their staff time for monitoring could also be used as match for this project. **The site visit will be held June 22 at 11:15am.** Paul said that he will not be able to attend, but Jay and Tracy will be there on behalf of the MRC. Representatives from the Swinomish Tribe, State Parks, and the NWSF will be there as well. Folks attending the site visit will need to park at the Kuketali Preserve trailhead parking lot. Parking is very limited. An update will be provided at the July 14 MRC meeting.

Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve Citizen Stewardship Committee, *Pete Haase and Morty Cohen*:

Unfortunately, due to the ESRP Small Grants Pilot Program proposals discussions running overtime, the Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve Citizen Stewardship Committee presentation had to be postponed for a future MRC meeting.

Project Status & Discussion

- **Salish Sea Stewards**, *Morty Cohen*: 19 newly trained Salish Sea Stewards volunteers graduated on May 17th. The volunteers have already been putting in an impressive amount of hours. Samantha drafted an online survey for the Salish Sea Stewards participants to complete. The Salish Sea Stewards Planning Committee (i.e. Morty, Pete,

Phyllis, Tracy and Samantha), will evaluate the program's success, look for ways to make improvements, and start planning for next year's training. Morty shared a really great article about the Salish Sea Stewards that was recently posted in the Anacortes American ([click here](#)). Beach Naturalists are scheduled to be at Washington Park on June 18 and June 19.

- **Shannon Point Nearshore Restoration, Paul Dinne!**: This project is still on hold until the City makes a decision about the proposed trail plans which might not fit with our nearshore restoration plans. Pre-construction nearshore monitoring continues.
- **Bowman Bay Nearshore Restoration, Jay Lind**: Bowman Bay has been a much harsher environment for the nearshore planting than originally anticipated. The site has experienced a 50% plant loss from the plantings that occurred in the late fall. SFEG will recruit volunteers to help with vegetation monitoring next week. SFEG plans to hold monthly weeding and plant maintenance parties. The NWSF hired an artist to design the interpretive signs. The artist recently completed the second draft design for review.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day, Pete Haase**: The Fidalgo Bay Resort has been reserved for August 27, 2016 (11am – 3pm). The Shannon Point Marine Center will not be able to participate with their touch tank this year. It is also still unclear whether or not the Samish canoe rides will be available. However, it looks like the State Parks might be able to participate with their whale skull. Jason Morgan indicated that he will be available to do the beach seining demonstration.
- **Olympia Oyster Restoration Paul Dinne!**: 24 bags of oyster seed were recently purchased with Skagit Restoration Initiative funds and delivered to the Cap Sante restoration site. Unfortunately, the seed densities were too low. In order to make up for the low seed densities, Paul collected a set of native oyster spawn from the bags that were previously placed in Fidalgo Bay and transferred them to the Cap Sante restoration site. The Puget Sound Restoration Fund (PSRF) was also able to provide additional seed which brought the total up to 6,000 oyster seed at the Cap Sante site. In addition, PSRF provided four bags of oyster seed for the new experimental site at Secret Harbor, Cypress Island. Preliminary monitoring results in Fidalgo Bay indicated that native oyster settlement was much higher than it has ever been in the past. Oyster bags near the trestle had as much as 538 oysters per bag, which is more than twice as high as they've ever seen. The higher than normal natural settlement rates could be attributed to unusually warmer weather, good food supplies, and a larger number of spawning oysters. It is anticipated that we might have reached the threshold required for a viable and sustainable native oyster population on the east side of the Fidalgo Bay trestle.
- **Pinto Abalone Restoration, Paul Dinne!**: Monitoring and seeding are now complete for 2016. Preliminary monitoring results indicate that the abalone at the restoration sites have increased in size and density. A final report will be provided in September.
- **Nearshore Monitoring, Jamey Selleck**: Monitoring continues at Bowman Bay, Shannon Point, and NW March's Point nearshore restoration sites. Bowman Bay beach seining will take place tomorrow.
- **Kayak Kelp Monitoring, Phyllis Bravinder**: Kelp monitoring protocol and kayak orientation training will take place this Saturday at 10:15am at Mystery Bay State Park. There will likely be additional training this summer. Monitoring will likely start in July.

Miscellaneous Events and Announcements:

- **Dine and Discover Event-** June 17, 2016 at Bayview State Park, 4-8pm. Skagit County and the Coastal Volunteer Partnership are co-sponsoring this free, fun, family event to celebrate the Padilla Bay and Samish Bay watersheds. There will be food, music, games, and prizes.
- **Effects Of Bulkheads Report:** Megan Dethier recently published a paper on the effects of bulkheads. Julie will email a copy of the report. The abstract is also available online: <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0272771416301007>.

The meeting adjourned at 11:18 AM. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, July 14, 2016, at the Skagit County Administration Building in Mount Vernon



SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the **July 14, 2016** 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, Erica Pickett (Liz Lovelett's Alternate), Sarah Tchang, Nathan Biletnikoff, Morty Cohen, Paul Dinnel, Kit Rawson, Jamey Selleck, Phyllis Bravinder, Julie Barber, Todd Woodard, Betsy Stevenson
- **MRC Members Absent:** Liz Lovelett
- **Others Attending:** Samantha Russell, CVP; Pete Haase (Morty Cohen's MRC Alternate); Lindsey Top (Padilla Bay NERR); Nathan Jainer (Padilla Bay NERR); Kathy Jacobson (DNR Aquatic Reserves); Kari Odden (Skagit Land Trust); Rachel Price (Shell); Bridget Trosin (WA Sea Grant); Todd Mitchell (Swinomish Tribe)

Call to Order and Introduction: Jay Lind called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. and opened the meeting with introductions.

Approval of Minutes: The June 9, 2016, MRC meeting minutes were approved as written.

Public Comments: There are a handful of County road right-of-ways that provide public access to beaches in Skagit County. A few local residents have expressed concern that some of the recreational activities at those locations might be causing damage to the beaches. Dan Berentson, the Director of Skagit County Public Works, is working with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife to install interpretive signage and asked for input from the MRC regarding messaging. The purpose is to help educate the public about the fragile beach ecosystem, what behaviors are inappropriate, and what citizens can do to help protect it.

Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Report: Jamey Selleck

- **Ginny Broadhurst Announcement:** Ginny announced that she will be leaving her position at the Northwest Straits Commission this fall. Ginny has been with the Northwest Straits Commission for 13 years (9 years as the Executive Director and 4 years as the Marine Program Manager). She will stay until the new Director is hired, which is anticipated to be by early November- in time for the annual MRC Conference. This is a state managed position and will be widely advertised through the Washington State Department of Ecology.
- **2016 MRC Conference:** November 4-5, 2016 in Port Townsend. Save the Date cards were distributed. Contact Ginny at Broadhurst@nwstraits.org if you would like to help with planning.
- **Puget Sound Partnership (PSP) Update:** Jamey Selleck and Leska Fore gave a presentation on the PSP's [Effectiveness Assessment Program](#). Weaverling Spit was one of the projects highlighted in the presentation. The PowerPoint presentation can be viewed here: <http://bit.ly/292UExu>. The 2016 PSP Action Agenda is now available online: www.psp.wa.gov/action_agenda_center.php.
- **Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSA):** The PSSA Near-Term Action proposal has been withdrawn from the Action Agenda because it was determined that it was not a good fit. The PSSA is a maritime designation for an area that may be vulnerable to damage by international maritime activities and needs special protection.
- **Next NWSC Meeting:** June 29, 10:00am - 12:00pm, WebEx.

Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) Report, Jay Lind:

- **NWSF Meetings:** NWSF meets every other month. The NWSF Executive Committee will have its first joint meeting with the NWSC Executive Committee on July 26. They hope to have one or two joint meetings per year to create more synergy.
- **Funding:** The Foundation would like to hire an intern to help with grant writing, but will need to come up with enough money to do so. Jay and Caroline have been busy searching for funding. They recently met with folks from the Puget Sound Shell Refinery in Anacortes to discuss potential funding opportunities to help support our work. Jay asked MRC members to provide a list of project ideas.

- **Derelict Crab Pots:** The Northwest Straits Foundation created several short crabbing instructional videos to help reduce derelict crab pots. The videos can be viewed on the Foundation's website: <http://www.nwstraitsfoundation.org/project/crabbing-instructional-videos/>. A link to the videos will also be provided on the MRC website. Salish Sea Stewards and other volunteers from the Coastal Volunteer Partnership handed out outreach materials to the recreational crabbers on July 1, the first day of crabbing season. Jay requested feedback from Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife regarding the number of abandoned crab pots that have been found in Skagit County waters following the recent outreach efforts. Jay said this information will help measure the effectiveness of the #CATCHMORECRAB campaign. Bridget Trosin with Sea Grant said that she regularly hands out pumpout kits to recreational boaters and offered to help hand out recreational crabber outreach materials at the same time. Todd pointed out that the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort is also great place to handout educational materials to recreational crabbers.

Administrative Report , Tracy Alker:

- **2016 - 2017 MRC Grant Application:** The proposals were reviewed by the NWSC staff and the Science Advisory Committee. There were a few comments and questions that are currently being addressed by the MRC Project Leads.
- **The Skagit County Population Health Trust Advisory Committee:** A data dashboard website featuring up to 120 different data points is currently being developed. The MRC was invited to participate in a two hour environment focus group in June to select the environmental indicators for the data dashboard website. Although no MRC members were available to participate in the focus group, MRC members were given another chance to participate by completing an online survey to select our top 12 environmental priorities.

Estuary & Salmon Restoration Program (ESRP) Small Grants Pilot Program Project Proposals:

The ESRP Small Grants Program is a pilot program for nearshore ecosystem restoration and protection projects to be completed between July 1, 2017-June 30, 2019. The \$50,000 to \$100,000 grant requires a 30% match (cash or in-kind services). Proposals are due July 31, 2016. This pilot program was established in effort to align the MRC and ESRP programs together to generate new community-driven nearshore projects. Per the grant requirements, the project proposals don't have to be an MRC project, but must support the goals of the MRC Strategic Plan and must include a MRC Acknowledgement Form signed by the MRC Chair. The MRC will not be involved in evaluating or ranking the proposals.

Jay noted that the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group has elected not to proceed with the Bowman Bay Marsh reconnection project proposal at this time. During the Bowman Bay site visit, it was determined that a feasibility study would be necessary for this project and the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group would not be able to provide the 30% match or staff time required for a feasibility study.

The following three project proposals were presented to the MRC. The Committee determined that all three of the proposals meet the goals of the Skagit MRC's Strategic Plan. Jay signed the MRC Acknowledgement Form for each proposal.

1. **Fidalgo Bay Shoreline Protection & Restoration (Skagit Land Trust's proposal):** The Skagit Land Trust recently acquired a one acre parcel featuring over 1,000' of shoreline along Fidalgo Bay, just south of the trestle. The property is directly adjacent to two conservation easements held by the Skagit Land Trust, including one on the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve. This proposal includes: demolition and removal of an existing home and foundation which is built immediately on the shoreline and partially over the tidelands; a feasibility study and preliminary design for removal of rip-rap and other shoreline modifications that have protected the house to restore natural shoreline structure and function; the removal of invasive plants and nearshore monitoring with the help of volunteers; and a small outreach component with the adjacent property owners. The Skagit Land Trust will be requesting approximately \$50,000 for this project proposal.

2. **Kukutali Tombolo Restoration (Swinomish Tribe's proposal):** A feasibility study was recently completed for this project. This proposal includes: removing the road and fill and replacing it with a trail to the Kuketali Preserve; removing ~550 feet of bank armoring to restore nearshore processes and tidal influences; and native plantings along the shoreline. This project would also protect and restore sediment source beaches in the adjacent drift cells that historically maintained the lagoon spit and tombolo. There will be a lot of opportunities for outreach and installing interpretive signage at the state park. The Skagit River Systems Cooperative (SRSC) will continue the ongoing monitoring at the site including; water quality monitoring, beach seining, beach sediment monitoring, and shellfish monitoring. The

Swinomish has applied for other grant funding to help with the construction which can also be used as a match for this grant. The Swinomish will be requesting approximately \$50,000 of ESRP funds for this project. The Northwest Straits Foundation has permission from the US Fish and Wildlife Service to transfer the grant funding from the Shannon Point Nearshore Restoration of around \$50,000, to the Kukutali Tombolo Restoration project. If this transfer of funds goes through, the ESRP funding would not be needed for this phase of the project.

3. Lone Tree Creek Restoration (Swinomish Tribe's proposal): Lone Tree Creek is located at the Thousand Trails Campground along the west shore of the Swinomish Reservation. The first phase of this project occurred between 2004 and 2007 and involved replacing five fish blocking culverts with a bridge and arched culverts to increase tidal influence and riparian buffer enhancements, and installed a trail and interpretive signage. The MRC was involved with the monitoring portion of this project before and after restoration. Monitoring efforts show juvenile chinook presence directly following restoration efforts. For this next phase of the project, the Swinomish is proposing to restore approximately 1200' of Lone Tree Creek upstream from previous restoration efforts in the pocket estuary by abandoning approximately 450' of culverts, decommissioning several roads, installing a new culvert under the county road (already have a letter of support from the county for this) realigning the stream southward, enhancing the riparian buffers with native plantings to improve water quality and salmon habitat for chinook and coho rearing, and improving sediment flow to the nearshore habitat. This project will also move around campground utilities and retrofit wastewater and stormwater systems in the area. There will also be an opportunity to install more interpretive trails and signage as part of this restoration project. The Swinomish Tribe currently has some Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) funding for construction that could be used towards the 30% match requirement of the ESRP grant. Todd Mitchell said that during the site visit, it was suggested that this project might not score as high for this particular grant because this project very narrowly meets the requirement to be within 500' of tidal influenced areas of the nearshore environment. Todd pointed out that Lone Tree Creek does flow directly into one of the most important shellfish areas of the Swinomish Tribe so any of the restoration work done within the Lone Tree Creek watershed will directly impact the Tribe's marine resources along the nearshore. The Swinomish plans to request around \$50,000 of ESRP funds for this project.

Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve Citizen Stewardship Committee, Pete Haase and Morty Cohen:

The Washington Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) established seven aquatic Reserves throughout the state including: Fidalgo Bay, Cypress Island, Cherry Point, Maury Island, Nisqually Reach, Smith and Minor Islands, and Protection Island. A technical committee is currently in the processes of reviewing a proposal to designate Lake Kapowsin in Pierce County as the first freshwater Aquatic Reserve. The purpose of the Aquatic Reserves designation is to promote the preservation, restoration, and enhancement of state-owned aquatic lands that are of special environmental, scientific, or educational interest. Other benefits include: encouraged public use and access, greater public input in conservation management, and collaboration with citizens, tribes, and state, local and federal governments to develop and implement management plans for long-term protection. Managing aquatic reserves does not affect private or other adjacent land ownership or general recreational activities. Citizen Stewardship Committees have been formed for five of the Aquatic Reserves including Fidalgo Bay. Citizens serving on these committees help implement the management actions for their local Aquatic Reserve. They are also involved in education and outreach, as well as citizen science projects.

Established in 2008, the Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve (FBAR) encompasses approximately 686 acres of state-owned land rich in biodiversity and is adjacent to four miles of shoreline. All six salmonid species are found through the FBAR. There are many different species of birds, marine mammals, and marine invertebrates. It is also home to one of the largest Great Blue Heron colonies in western North America. Some of the greatest threats to the FBAR include stormwater pollution, bulkheads and docks, and the loss of native vegetation.

The FBAR Citizen Stewardship Committee was established in 2012 and consists of ten local community residents, including three MRC members: Morty Cohen, Phyllis Bravinder, and Pete Haase. The Committee is chartered through the FBAR Management Plan and is responsible for helping to protect the Aquatic Reserve by overseeing citizen science monitoring, reviewing management policies, guiding public outreach and education, and examining activities (particularly land use proposals) that could potentially impact the Aquatic Reserve. The Committee meets monthly and receives staff support and coordination through WDNR and scientific monitoring support through RE-Sources for Sustainable Communities. Some of the citizen science activities include forage fish surveys (75 total sites) and intertidal monitoring. A large number of volunteers who are involved in the monitoring are Salish Sea Stewards and former Beach Watchers. They are currently in their fourth year of collecting monitoring data. The FBAR has the most documented forage fish spawning out of all of the other Aquatic Reserves in the state. WDNR maintains all of the monitoring data for

the Aquatic Reserves. Monitoring attracts a lot of curious onlookers which has also provided a great opportunity to conduct some outreach. The Friends of Skagit Beaches Trail Tales program has a really great rolling interpretive display to help with outreach during monitoring. Some of the other outreach efforts of the Citizen Stewardship Committee have included the installation FBAR signage and public sessions on the FBAR's management plan and the regulatory tools that are available for the Aquatic Reserve. They also have a display and developed education and outreach materials to hand out at special events. In addition to citizen science and outreach, the Committee has been involved in reviewing and commenting on various planning and technical documents and land use proposals. For more information about the Aquatic Reserves: <http://www.aquaticreserves.org>.

Project Status & Discussion

- **Salish Sea Stewards:** The quarterly progress report for Salish Sea Stewards has been completed. Please contact Tracy if you would like a copy of the report. Over 600 volunteer hours have been reported by the new Salish Seas Stewards. Many of those hours were contributed to MRC projects. Morty thanked Samantha for doing an outstanding job recruiting and coordinating volunteers to help with MRC projects. The new Salish Sea Stewards completed an online survey to help evaluate the 2016 training program. The planning committee will meet on August 9 to evaluate the program and start planning the training for next year. MRC members are invited to attend the meeting and to participate in the planning process.
- **Shannon Point Nearshore Restoration:** This project has been put on hold indefinitely as we wait for the City to make a decision about the proposed trail plans. The City hired a consultant to look at different design options and costs for the Guemes Island trail. The least expensive trail design calls for the majority of the riprap to be left in place, which would no longer fit our nearshore restoration plans to remove the riprap. In the meantime, the Northwest Straits Foundation has permission from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife to move the current funding from Shannon Point to the Kukutali Preserve project. We will reassess the project once we get more information from the City. In the meantime, we will no longer continue our monitoring efforts at this site.
- **Bowman Bay Nearshore Restoration:** The interpretive signs are almost done. The Northwest Straits Foundation is waiting for feedback from State Parks to make sure the signage meets their requirements. The MRC and the Foundation will start planning an outreach event for unveiling the signage. The event will need to be scheduled before September 30, 2016 because that is when the grant expires. MRC members are encouraged to help plan the outreach event. Please let Tracy or Lisa know if you would like to help. Lisa is still looking for a team of volunteers to regularly assist with stewardship of the site including planting, watering, and weeding.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** The Fidalgo Bay Resort has been reserved for August 27, 2016 (11am – 3pm). Planning and event promotion continues. Partner organizations with educational displays have been confirmed. Many MRC members have already been given assignments. The rest of the volunteer recruitment for specific tasks during the event will begin soon.
- **Olympia Oyster Restoration:** Paul conducted surveys with the help of several volunteers. Survey results indicated that the four new oyster shell plots (~250 cubic yards of shell) deployed in 2014 and 2015 on the eastern side of the Fidalgo Bay trestle experienced very high densities of spawning settlement (~300 to 600 native oysters per square meter). Paul pointed out that we've never had more than 100 oysters per square meter in Fidalgo Bay. Most of the native oyster settlement has been on the east side of Fidalgo Bay, not the west side due to the currents causing limited mixing on the west side. In an effort to expand the native oyster population to the western side of Fidalgo Bay, oyster seed bags were delivered and distributed to Sea Farers Park and two Cap Sante Marina locations with Skagit Restoration Initiative funding and Puget sound Restoration Fund. On July 22, Paul will catch a ride on WDNR's boat to deploy four oyster seed bags at Secret Harbor, Cypress Island along with temperature/salinity data loggers that were paid for with this MRC grant funding. In addition, Paul is also working on a final report for the oyster restoration work that has been going on for the past three or four years.
- **Pinto Abalone Restoration:** Pinto abalone seeding and monitoring has been completed for this year. Preliminary survey results at the four out plant sites around Burrows and Allan Islands indicate the density, survival, aggregation and growth at several of these sites are above the minimum requirement for successful broadcast events. High resolution temporal surveys occurred from April-June at the two newer sites on Cypress Island. The number of new tag encounters during each of these surveys was high, suggesting that the actual density at

these sites is much higher than what is assumed after a single survey. Approximately 400 juvenile abalone were also added to each site this year. A final report will be provided in September.

- **Nearshore Monitoring:** Intertidal surveys occurred at Bowman Bay and Shannon Point last month. Jason Toft with UW and Hannah Faulkner with WDFW assisted with the Bowman Bay intertidal survey as part of a larger collaborative effort to evaluate the effects of shoreline armoring restoration efforts on a regional scale. Their study will include the MRC monitoring data and a few additional monitoring parameters. The next intertidal survey for NW March's Point is scheduled for August 2. Monthly beach seining and forage fish monitoring continue at Bowman Bay, Shannon Point, and Northwest March's Point. The Samish DNR is leading the seining effort in Fidalgo Bay including NW March's Point.
- **Kelp Monitoring:** The Skagit kelp monitoring planning team had their first meeting earlier this month (ie Samantha Russell, Bob Weathers, Phyllis Bravinder, Brittany Jones, and Tracy Alker). Bob, Samantha, and one of the new Salish Sea Stewards will be conducting the surveys at just one site this year to kick off, but hope to survey additional sites next year. The bull kelp bed that will be surveyed this year is located along the shoreline between Washington Park and Shannon Point. The first survey will take place Monday, July 18 at 8:00am, between Washington Park and Shannon Point. Surveys will continue July, August, and September. Please let Phyllis or Samantha know if you are interested in helping with the surveys. Someone donated a kayak to the Coastal Volunteer Partnership so that volunteers who don't have a kayak can help with this project. Kathy Jacobson noted that WDNR is also conducting kelp monitoring. Here is a link to their most recent report: http://file.dnr.wa.gov/publications/aqr_nrsh_vanwagenen_2015_kelp_tables.pdf.
- **Weaverling Spit Phase 2:** Todd said they are still waiting to receive a permit from the US Army Corps of Engineers before they can move forward with the project. They cannot go out to bid without it. A site visit was held on May 4th. This project might have to be postponed until 2017.
- **Forage Fish Index Site Surveys:** Skagit County Intern, Charlette Turman is currently being trained to become the project lead for Skagit MRC's index sites at Ship Harbor and Bowman Bay.

Miscellaneous Events and Announcements:

- **Swinomish Channel Beach Cleanup:** The Skagit MRC is partnering with RE-Sources and the Coastal Volunteer Partnership to co-sponsor a beach cleanup event along the Swinomish Channel on August 6 at 12pm-3pm. For exact location and parking details, please sign up with Samantha Russell at srussell@padillabay.gov. Refreshments will be provided.
- **Skagit Land Trust Annual Picnic:** Saturday, July 30, from 11am to 1pm at Deception Pass Park, Bowman Bay ADA Picnic Shelter. Please bring a dish to share.

The meeting adjourned at 11:18 AM. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, August 11, 2016, at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort in Anacortes



SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the **August 11, 2016** Skagit County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) meeting, held at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort in Anacortes (9:00am to 11:00am)

Attendees:

- **MRC Members Attending:** Tracy Alker, Jay Lind, Liz Lovelett, Sarah Tchang, Morty Cohen, Paul Dinnel, Kit Rawson, Jamey Selleck, Phyllis Bravinder, Jodi Bluhm (Todd Woodard's alternate), Nathan Biletnikoff,
- **MRC Members Absent:** Julie Barber, Betsy Stevenson, Todd Woodard
- **Others Attending:** Charlette Thurman, SCPW; Kathy Jacobson, DNR Aquatic Resources; Rachel Price (Nathan Biletnikoff's alternate)

Call to Order and Introduction: Jay Lind called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and opened the meeting with introductions.

Approval of Minutes: The July 14, 2016, MRC meeting minutes were approved as written.

Public Comments: None.

Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Report: Jamey Selleck

- **NWSC Director:** Ginny will be leaving her position as Director of NWSC this fall. She plans to stay until the transition of the new Director is complete. The position hasn't been posted yet, but will be widely advertised through the Department of Ecology.
- **NWSI Strategic Plan:** There is a need to update the Northwest Straits Initiative's Strategic Plan. MRCs will be asked to provide updated project information.
- **2016 MRC Conference:** November 4-5, 2016 in Port Townsend. There will be a showing of the film Sonic Sea (www.sonicsea.org/film) at the conference, followed by a panel discussion from industry experts. Contact Ginny at Broadhurst@nwstraits.org if you would like to help with planning. Kit suggested including a session about the history, goals, and accomplishments of Northwest Straits Initiative.
- **Puget Sound Partnership (PSP) Update:** PSP has had another cut in funding. The managing Director of the Council on Environmental Quality will visit in September.
- **Highlighting MRC Projects and Events:** It is important for MRCs to take ownership and get acknowledgement for their projects and events. MRC members are encouraged to share project information and event information and photos with Nicole at Jordan@nwstraits.org or Sasha at horst@nwstraits.org.
- **Next NWSC Meeting:** August 26, 10:00am - 3:00pm, at the Ecology Field Office in Bellingham.

Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) Report, Jay Lind:

- **NWSF Meetings:** NWSF meets every other month. The next Board meeting will be held next Thursday.
- **Commission and Foundation Executive Committee Meeting:** The NWSF Executive Committee had its first joint meeting with the NWSC Executive Committee on July 26. They will continue to meet regularly. They discussed the role of the Commission and the Foundation and the flow of funding.
- **Derelict Crab Pots:** The Foundation's focus is on derelict crab pot prevention through education and outreach rather than removing derelict crab pots. Data shows that around 12,000 crab pots are lost each year, 30% of which belong to new recreational crabbers. This data indicates just how important it is to prevent and reduce the number lost crab pots through education and outreach. After crabbing season ends in September, the Foundation will evaluate how many crab pots have been lost and whether or not the education and outreach campaign was effective.

Administrative Report, Tracy Alker:

- **2016-2017 MRC Grant Application:** The project leads made revisions to the project proposals based on feedback and comments received from the NWSC Staff and the Technical Review Committee. However, the MRC grant application cannot be re-submitted until the MRC comes up with another solution for the Nearshore

Monitoring proposal because MRC grant funding cannot be used to contract with the Northwest Straits Foundation to do the work.

- **Skagit Water Weeks (August 27 – Sept 30):** The Skagit Conservation Education Alliance (SCEA) invited the Skagit MRC to participate in the 1st Annual Skagit Water Weeks Celebration beginning August 27th and continuing through September 30. Skagit Water Weeks is a series of events and activities hosted by local organizations and residents to celebrate Skagit County's precious water resources, promote local stewardship opportunities, share information about the state of our local waters, and expand awareness and appreciation of our water resources. Skagit MRC's Fidalgo Bay Day will be the first event to kick off the five-week long celebration. SCEA is promoting our event on the Skagit Water Weeks poster, brochure, media ads, and social media sources, at no cost to the MRC. A Skagit Water Weeks Proclamation will also be presented to the Skagit County Commissioners. Tracy handed out copies of the Skagit Water Weeks brochures at the MRC meeting. The poster and brochures are also posted on the [News & Events Page](#) of the Skagit MRC website: www.skagitmrc.org.
- **Skagit River Salmon Festival (September 10, 10am to 6pm).** Over 5,000 people are expected to attend this event. Please let Tracy know if you can help with the MRC display for a few hours. Having our display at this event will give the Skagit MRC some great exposure and increase our visibility in the community.
- **MRC Membership Update:** Liz Lovelett announced her resignation from the Skagit MRC. Liz has been a valuable part of the Skagit MRC over the last three years and we are all sorry to see her go. Liz said she will try to find someone else to represent the City of Anacortes as her replacement on the MRC.

Estuary & Salmon Restoration Program (ESRP) Small Grants Pilot Program- Smokehouse Dike Setback Proposal:

The Skagit River Systems Cooperative and the Swinomish Tribe considered applying for the ESRP Small Grants program for the Smokehouse Tidelands Dike Setback project, but ended up not submitting an application. The project entails design work for setting back 5,900 linear feet of dike along Swinomish Slough to restore 120 acres of tidal saltmarsh wetland. They have been invited to present the proposal at a future MRC meeting.

Project Status & Discussion

- **Salish Sea Stewards:** The new Salish Sea Stewards logo was presented to the MRC. The logo was designed to help with branding and increase the visibility of the Salish Sea Stewards as a Skagit MRC program. The logo will need to be approved by the NWSC before it goes to print. The new Salish Sea Stewards volunteers completed an online survey to help evaluate the 2016 training program. There will be an ocean acidification seminar for community leaders this fall that will be run by the Salish Sea Stewards volunteers. Stay tuned for more information! The committee (i.e. Morty, Phyllis, Pete, Tracy, and Samantha) started planning the training for next year. The 40 hour training program will likely start March 7, 2017 and continue for 10 weeks. Classes will be held Tuesdays, 1:00pm-5:00pm at Padilla Bay. Next year there will not be any scheduled beach naturalist interpretive programs at the beach unless there are volunteers who are willing to take that on themselves. Instead, the beach naturalist portion of the Salish Sea Stewards program will focus on the interpretive signage that will be installed at Washington Park in Anacortes. The goal of the signage is to help educate the public about the tide pools and proper beach etiquette. The beach naturalist volunteers will survey visitors to help evaluate the effectiveness of the signage. Kathy Jacobson said that there is a research paper on effective messaging for interpretive signs that she recommended we use as a reference for developing our signs.
- **Shannon Point Nearshore Restoration:** The Shannon Point nearshore restoration and monitoring has been put on hold until the City makes a decision about the proposed trail plans. If the City decides to build the trail on the causeway and leave the majority of the rip rap in place for support, we will not be able to move forward with this project because it will no longer fit with our nearshore restoration plans. In the meantime, the Northwest Straits Foundation got permission to transfer the funding for this project to the Kukatali Preserve restoration project.
- **Bowman Bay Nearshore Restoration:** The Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group (SFEG) recruited volunteers to help with vegetation monitoring. The site has experienced a 50% plant loss from the plantings that occurred in the late fall of 2015. SFEG plans to hold monthly weeding and plant maintenance parties. Lisa is still looking for a team of volunteers to regularly assist with stewardship of the site including planting, watering, and weeding. The interpretive signs are almost done. The Northwest Straits Foundation is waiting for feedback from State Parks to make sure the signage meets their requirements. The MRC and the Foundation will start planning an



outreach event for unveiling the signage. The event will need to be scheduled before September 30, 2016 because that is when the grant expires. MRC members are encouraged to help plan the outreach event. Please let Tracy or Lisa know if you would like to help.

- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** The Fidalgo Bay Resort has been reserved for August 27, 2016 (11am – 3pm). Planning and event promotion continues. Partner organizations with educational displays have been confirmed. Many MRC members have been given assignments. In order to increase the MRC visibility at the event, we will have a large photo booth cutout of a scuba diver swimming with sea lions and holding a Skagit MRC sign. In addition to our tabletop display with project posters, we will have our forage fish beanbag toss game and the stormdrain putting game and will be participating in the passport activity. This event has been widely promoted so we anticipate a great turnout. Instead of the touch tank we will have a whale skull and eel grass display. We will still have the beach seining activity, but no canoe rides. We will also have chowder from local restaurants, salmon BBQ, oysters, brownies and popcorn.
- **Olympia Oyster Restoration:** A draft four-year report will be sent to MRC members for review. Monitoring results in Fidalgo Bay indicate that native oyster spawning and settlement on the east side of the Fidalgo Bay trestle continues to improve. It is anticipated that the oysters might have reached the threshold required for a sustainable population in that area (an estimated 4.8 million oysters). New sites for distributing additional shell substrate along the west side of Fidalgo Bay are being investigated, to expand oyster larval settlement and spawning in that area where there has been little settlement.
- **Pinto Abalone Restoration:** Preliminary survey results at the four out plant sites around Burrows and Allan Islands indicate the density, survival, aggregation and growth at several of these sites are above the minimum requirement for successful broadcast events. Approximately 400 juvenile abalone were added to each site. A final report will be provided in September. Josh Bouma will be invited to present the pinto abalone report at a future MRC meeting.
- **Nearshore Monitoring:** This past month, monitoring efforts included one beach seining at Bowman Bay and an intertidal survey at NW March's Point. The large woody debris and beach wrack monitoring at NW March's Point will be completed later this month. Eleven volunteers have contributed 42 hours conducting nearshore monitoring. Volunteers are currently compiling the season's data into a database. The Samish Indian Nation continues to lead the beach seining effort Fidalgo Bay.
- **Kelp Monitoring:** Bob and Samantha surveyed bull kelp along Shannon Point on July 18th. However, it was determined that the Shannon Point kelp bed might not be the best location to survey. They will try surveying at coffin rocks in Bowman Bay at the end of August since it seems to have more reliable and consistent access for kayakers.
- **Weaverling Spit Phase 3:** Due to permitting issues, this project has been postponed until 2017.
- **Forage Fish Index Site Surveys:** Skagit County intern, Charlette Turman is the project lead for Skagit MRC's forage fish index site at Ship Harbor. Charlette is working closely with Pete Haase to identify additional index sites to survey as well. The Forage Fish Index Sites are documented spawning areas in each tidal reference area identified by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife for potential monthly sampling. Monitoring Forage Fish Index Sites is a way to look at annual variations in spawning activity of the forage fish population.

Miscellaneous Events and Announcements:

- **European Green Crab Monitoring:** Emily Grayson from the University of Washington has been working with the Puget Sound Shell Refinery to conduct European green crab monitoring at Crandall Spit. Luckily no invasive crabs were found.
- **Clam Surveys and Harvesting:** Julie Barber, a Shellfish Biologist with the Swinomish Tribe, is coordinating with the Puget Sound Shell Refinery to conduct clam harvesting surveys at Crandall Spit. A report will be coming out in a couple months. The refinery will also help coordinate the clam harvesting as well.

The meeting adjourned at 10:45 AM. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, September 8, 2016, at the Skagit County Administration Building in Mount Vernon



SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the **September 8, 2016** Skagit County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) meeting, held at the Skagit County Administration Building in Mount Vernon

Attendees:

- **MRC Members Attending:** Tracy Alker, Jay Lind, Erica Pickett (City of Anacortes Alternate), Sarah Tchang, Morty Cohen, Betsy Stevenson, Todd Woodard, Kit Rawson, Jamey Selleck, Bob Weathers (Phyllis Bravinder's Alternate)
- **MRC Members Absent:** Julie Barber, Phyllis Bravinder, Nathan Biletnikoff, Paul Dinnel
- **Others Attending:** Charlette Thurman, SCPW; Kathy Jacobson, DNR Aquatic Resources; Pete Haase (Morty Cohen's Alternate); Lisa Kaufman, NWSF; Samantha Russell, CVP; Matt Reynolds, City of Anacortes (MRC Applicant); Sharon Riggs, PBNERR; Mikkel Lamay, WSDOT; Jason Korski, WSDOT; Nan McKay, NWSC; Andrea Petrich, WDOT; Marqise Allen, WSDOT; Bridget Trosin, WA Sea Grant

Call to Order and Introduction: Jay Lind called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and opened the meeting with introductions.

Approval of Minutes: The August 11, 2016, MRC meeting minutes were approved as written.

Public Comments: Lisa Kaufman reported that the Guemes Island Planning Advisory Committee (GIPAC) recently received a \$10,000 donation for a shoreline restoration or habitat improvement project and is seeking assistance in identifying potential projects. Please contact Lisa if you have any project ideas.

Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Report: Jamey Selleck

- **NWSC Gubernatorial Appointees:** Nan McKay introduced herself to Skagit MRC. She is one of the four gubernatorial appointees on the NWSC including Ron Tom, Jerry Masters, and Tom Cowan. They are advocates for the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative (NWSI), and feel that it is important to get to know the MRCs better. They each selected an MRC to "adopt". Nan selected Skagit and Whatcom MRCs and plans to regularly attend MRC meetings.
- **NWSC Director:** The NWSC position has been posted nationwide. Please help widely distribute the announcement found here: <https://t.co/7jiG7Oq1dr>.
- **2016 MRC Conference:** November 4-5, 2016 in Port Townsend. Planning continues. Conference highlight:
 - Keynote speaker: Jonathan White, Author, on his new book *Tides: The Science and Spirit of the Ocean*
 - Film screening of *Sonic Sea* and a presentation on ocean noise presented by expert Rob Williams.
 - A special presentation by Adam Summers. Adam is a Biomechanist at Friday Harbor Labs and an ichthyology advisor for movies like *Finding Nemo* and *Finding Dory*.
- **Puget Sound Partnership (PSP) Update:** The PSP is facing even more budget cuts, which means funding for the NWSC will also be reduced.
- **Shoreline Master Program (SMP) Rule Changes and Net Pen Update:** Representatives from the Department of Ecology presented on SMP rule changes, no discharge zones for vessels, and updates on the issue of net pens. The NWSC will draft a comment letter regarding net pens.
- **Next NWSC Meeting:** September 30, WebEx meeting (10:00AM to 12:00PM).

Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) Report, Jay Lind:

- **MRC Celebration:** Snohomish MRC recently held a celebration for their MRC members at a winery in Woodinville. Jerry Masters, the president of the NWSF, is interested in hosting a similar celebration for Skagit MRC. Please let Jay know if you have any suggestions for a good location to hold the celebration.
- **NWSF Funding:** Caroline continues to seek funding to help support the MRCs. The Foundation is trying to find other sources of funding to support nearshore monitoring. Caroline will be presenting to Shell on September 13.

- **MRC Opportunity Fund (Application Deadline: October 31, 2016):** The MRC Opportunity Fund is a designated fund established by the Foundation to which MRCs can apply for up to \$10,000 per year. Funding is dependent on private donations secured through a 1:1 matching pledge for projects that engage volunteers. The application deadline is October 31, 2016. Skagit MRC members unanimously agreed to submit an application for the nearshore monitoring project since there are currently no other sources of funding to do the work.

Sharpe's Corner Interchange Project, Washington State Department of Transportation:

- **Project Overview:** Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is proposing to install two roundabouts to improve safety and relieve congestion along SR 20 at the Sharpes Corner interchange. They will try to limit the amount of new impervious area as much as possible. In addition, a pervious bike/pedestrian path is being proposed to connect to the Tommy Thompson Trail. A team of stakeholders looked at different design alternatives and held three open houses. They are currently in the very early stages of design (approximately 30%). The estimated timeline for construction is 2018-2019. WSDOT offered to give an update after 60% of the project design is complete.
- **Stormwater Treatment:** Under existing conditions, there are no formal treatments in place for stormwater runoff from Highway 20. For this project, WSDOT's Best Management Practices (BMPs) for stormwater treatment will exceed the minimum standards of Ecology. They are proposing to install wide vegetated filter strips and compost amended filter strips along the edge of the road to help treat stormwater runoff to Fidalgo Bay. Soils will be tested for filtration ability. In areas where vegetated filter strips aren't feasible, the stormwater runoff will be captured and piped to other treatment system areas. A small stormwater detention pond will be installed near the project area for flow control to protect the stream morphology located just downstream of the outfall to Fidalgo Bay.
- **Stormwater Monitoring:** WSDOT noted that there are no plans to monitor water quality with this project. Todd pointed out that the Samish, in partnership with the MRC, conducted a water quality study for heavy metals and other contaminants at the outfalls in Fidalgo Bay several years ago. Results showed that there were no significant amounts of heavy metals from stormwater runoff, even without any formal stormwater treatment systems in place. MRC members expressed interest in conducting a similar water quality study, pre and post construction, to see if conditions changed.

Administrative Report, Tracy Aker:

- **2016-2017 MRC Grant Application:** Our grant application has been revised, re-submitted, and approved. The Nearshore Monitoring proposal was removed from the grant application. We will need to work with the NWSF to find another source of funding to pay for the nearshore monitoring work.
- **MRC Conference Registration and Reimbursements:** The MRC Conference Registration deadline is **October 12**. MRC members are responsible for their own conference registration and hotel reservations. A registration fee applies to non-MRC members, so be sure to identify yourself as an MRC member. MRC members can get reimbursed for lodging (at the government rate) and travel. Be sure to keep your receipts. Please let Tracy know if you have any questions about reimbursement. Hotels who accept government rate reservations are listed on the conference website: <http://nwstraits.org/2016-mrc-conference/>.
- **Skagit River Salmon Festival (September 10, 10am to 6pm):** Tracy, Kit and Jay signed up to help with the MRC display. Over 5,000 people are expected to attend this event, so having our display there will give the Skagit MRC some great exposure and increase our visibility in the community.

Project Status & Discussion

- **Salish Sea Stewards:** Over 900 hours of volunteer service have been reported by Salish Sea Steward volunteers. Planning is under way for next year's training. The 40 hour training program will start March 7, 2017 and continue for 10 weeks through May 9, 2017. Classes will be held Tuesdays, 1:00pm-5:00pm at Padilla Bay. Applications will be accepted starting in December. Four people at Fidalgo Bay Day signed up to receive an application for the 2017 Salish Sea Stewards training. An ocean acidification seminar will be held for Salish Sea Stewards and business leaders to take action at the local level to address climate change and ocean acidification.
- **Bowman Bay Nearshore Restoration:** The dune grass planted along the shoreline is not doing very well. We will probably need to plant more dune grass next year. At least one or two volunteers are needed to take the lead with stewardship of the site including planting, watering, and weeding. Nearshore monitoring is ongoing and

will continue as funding allows. Lots of post larval surf smelt caught in the beach seine. The interpretive signs will be going into production on Monday. The sign unveiling will likely be held sometime in late October. The unveiling event invitation will be extended to elected officials and school groups. Some event activities that are being considered include a beach seining demonstration, beach walks, forage fish demonstration, etc. Please let Lisa know if you have any other suggestions.

- **Fidalgo Bay Day – August 27, 2016:** Pete provided a brief presentation and slide show of the event. Pete noted that Fidalgo Bay Day is a great way to reach families with young kids who might not otherwise get our message. We had over 350 visitors, 50 volunteers, 180 hours of volunteer time, 22 participating organizations, 25 exit surveys and 120 passports were completed. The event was opened with a warm Samish Indian Nation welcome from Rosie Cayou. Rosie also offered a traditional no-host salmon BBQ lunch. Highlights included interactive educational displays, face painting, arts and crafts activities, beach seining, and a whale skull. Free samples of seafood chowder were provided by local restaurants (Johnny Picassos, Mary Anne’s Kitchen, and Adrift Restaurant), free samples of oysters and clams were provided by Taylor Shellfish, and free brownies were provided by Gere-A-Deli. We also offered complimentary popcorn, coffee, and lemonade. Pete is looking into setting a date for next year’s event. Please let Pete know if you would like to help with event planning.
- **Olympia Oyster Restoration:** A draft four-year report is currently under review. New sites for distributing additional shell substrate along the west side of Fidalgo Bay are being investigated. Jay shared an article about the oyster restoration work that was recently published in the [Skagit Valley Herald](#). The article was also posted on the NWSC Facebook page.
- **Pinto Abalone Restoration:** A final report will be provided before the grant expires at the end of this month.
- **Nearshore Monitoring:** Jason will give a brief nearshore monitoring report at next month’s MRC meeting. Jason and/or Jamey will also present to the Puget Sound Partnership’s Puget Sound Ecosystem Monitoring Program (PESEMP). Monthly beach seining and forage fish spawning surveys are ongoing at Bowman Bay. Found lots of post larval surf smelt in the beach seine. The large woody debris and beach wrack monitoring at NW March’s Point was completed last month. There appears to be a greater diversity of wrack at NW March’s Point compared to Bowman Bay. Eggs were also found within the wrack at NW March’s Point. Nearshore monitoring is no longer going on at Shannon Point. The money for Shannon Point has been transferred to the Kukutali Reserve Restoration project. Lisa, Jason, and Jamey will work with the Swinomish to develop a monitoring plan at Kukutali.
- **Kelp Monitoring:** Bob Weathers and Samantha Russell surveyed a kelp bed near Shannon Point on July 18. On August 20, Bob surveyed the kelp bed surrounding coffin rocks at the mouth of Bowman Bay. He thinks this location will be much better to survey than Shannon Point because it is easier to access for kayakers. The last survey for the season will be conducted in September. A meeting will be held in Port Townsend to discuss the kelp monitoring techniques and consistency of data collected and the degree of variation between volunteers. Samantha pointed out that kelp monitoring will be included in the 2017 Salish Sea Stewards training curriculum.
- **Forage Fish Index Site Surveys:** Charlette Turman continues to conduct forage fish surveys at Ship Harbor. Charlette and Pete are also working to identify additional index sites to survey. Lisa said that the Similk Bay property owner who is in the processes of removing shoreline armoring, might also be open to conducting forage fish surveys on her property.

MRC Membership Applicant, Matt Reynolds:

Liz Lovelett recently resigned her position as the City of Anacortes representative on the Skagit MRC. Per consensus, Skagit MRC unanimously agreed to make the recommendation to the Board of Skagit County Commissioners to appoint Matt Reynolds as Liz’s replacement. Matt is currently the Assistant Public Works Director for the City of Anacortes. Erica Pickett will serve as Matt’s alternate.

Miscellaneous Events and Announcements:

None

The meeting adjourned at 11:25 AM. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, October 13, 2016, at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort in Anacortes.



SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the **October 13, 2016** Skagit County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) meeting, held at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort in Anacortes

Attendees:

- **MRC Members Attending:** Tracy Alker, Jay Lind, Sarah Tchang, Phyllis Bravinder, Nathan Biletnikoff, Paul Dinnel, Todd Woodard, Pete Haase (Morty Cohen's Alternate), Tim Manns (Kit Rawson's Alternate),
- **MRC Members Absent:** Julie Barber, Morty Cohen, Betsy Stevenson, Kit Rawson, Jamey Selleck
- **Others Attending:** Jason Morgan, NWSF; Samantha Russell, CVP; Matt Reynolds, City of Anacortes (MRC Applicant); Suzanne Shull, PBNERR; Bridget Trosin, WA Sea Grant; Madeline Rose, Salish Sea Steward

Call to Order and Introduction: Jay Lind called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and opened the meeting with introductions.

Approval of Minutes: The September 8, 2016, MRC meeting minutes were approved as written.

Public Comments:

- Nate shared that Shell is still interested in pursuing the estuary restoration project west of Telegraph Slough. They are currently seeking partners who would be able to see the project come to fruition. They have already invested nearly one million dollars in the project design, engineering, and advanced monitoring. It will cost around \$10 million to complete the project. The project moving forward will depend on negotiations with the land owner and stake holders.

Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Report: Jay Lind

- **White House Council on Environmental Quality:** Christy Goldfuss, Managing Director of the White House Council on Environmental Quality will be visiting the Puget Sound area October 17-19. As part of this trip, she will be visiting the Fir Island Restoration project in Skagit County. Jay will look into the possibility of attending that site visit.
- **NWSC Director:** The search committee will be selecting four candidates to interview.
- **NWSC Ocean Acidification Forum at Padilla Bay- Oct 7:** The Commission hosted an Ocean Acidification Forum for Salish Sea Stewards at Padilla Bay on October 7. Over 25 people, attended.
- **2016 MRC Conference:** November 4-5, 2016 in Port Townsend. Due to scheduled maintenance at the Coupeville ferry terminal, there will be no ferry service for the Pot Townsend/Coupeville route on Nov 5 or 6. Go to the following WDOT link for more information: <http://bit.ly/2dMLWX9>.
- **Defining Ecosystem Health:** Tom Mumford presented on ecosystem health as it fits within the NW Straits Initiative's work. See his full presentation here: <http://nwstraits.org/media/2230/ecosystem-health-presentation.pdf>
- **Next NWSC Meeting:** November 4, 10:00AM – 11:00AM at the MRC Conference in Port Townsend. The mini update to the Strategic Plan will be approved.

Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) Report, Jay Lind:

- **NWSF Retreat:** The NWSF retreat was recently held at Jerry Master's house on Camano Island. The purpose of the retreat was to help energize and empower board members and provide them with a clear understanding of the direction of the Foundation and its role in the Northwest Straits Initiative. They focused on outlining actions to increase the flow of funding to the Foundation so that it can continue its operations and support of the MRCs. It is much more difficult to get funding for general operating costs versus funding for a specific project. Increasing the visibility of the Foundation and MRCs is key.
- **NWSF Funding for Nearshore Monitoring:** The Foundation found another source of funding to support nearshore monitoring in Skagit County.

- **NWSF Board Members:** Anne Murphy and Betsy Lyons were recently appointed as the newest board members. The Foundation currently has eight board members, but can have up to 13. Please contact Jay if you know anyone who might be interested in becoming a board member.
- **Derelict Gear Removal and Prevention:** Most of the derelict nets (over 6000) have been removed throughout Puget Sound. Although the Foundation continues to remove derelict crab pots, the focus has primarily shifted to preventing the accumulation of derelict gear through continued outreach and gear impact and modification research. Over 12,000 crab pots are lost every year. The Foundation created several recreational crabbing educational videos to help reduce lost pots that they posted on their website (<http://www.nwstraitsfoundation.org/project/crabbing-instructional-videos/>). King 5 News recently did a story on the Foundation's derelict crab pot removal and prevention efforts. <http://www.king5.com/tech/science/environment/lost-crab-pots-cleared-from-puget-sound/327439073>.

MRC Citizen Science Opportunity Fund (Application Deadline- October 31, 2016)

The MRC Opportunity Fund is a designated fund established by the Foundation to which MRCs can apply for up to \$10,000 per year. Funding is dependent on private donations secured through a 1:1 matching pledge for projects that engage volunteers. At the MRC meeting last month, Skagit MRC members unanimously agreed to submit an application for the nearshore monitoring project. However, since that time, the Northwest Straits Foundation was able to secure funding from another source to support the nearshore monitoring work. With the recent discovery of the European green crab invasion in Padilla Bay, and all of prime habitat for green crabs that we have in this area, Paul Dinnel suggested applying for the MRC Citizen Science Opportunity Fund to expand the invasive green crab monitoring and trapping effort throughout Skagit County. Funding could be used for purchasing equipment and volunteer training and coordination through the Coastal Volunteer Partnership. Todd stated that his Samish crew could help with the green crab monitoring in Fidalgo Bay which would help leverage the Opportunity Funds. The consensus of the committee was unanimous to submit an application for green crab monitoring. Paul agreed to be the project lead and will collaborate with the other partner organizations involved in green crab monitoring to draft the proposal. Jay pointed out that Ginny is looking into the possibility of incorporating a discussion about green crabs at the upcoming MRC conference.

Administrative Report, Tracy Alker:

- **2015-2016 MRC Grant:** The grant expired September 30, 2016. All of the deliverables and invoices have been submitted and now we are in the process of closing out the grant. Tracy thanked the MRC members for submitting their volunteer hours and project reports.
- **2016-2017 MRC Grant:** The MRC grant is currently going through the signature process at the County. It is expected to get signed in the next week or two.
- **Skagit River Salmon Festival:** Tracy thanked Kit and Jay for helping out with the MRC booth at the Skagit River Salmon Festival last month. The event brochure featured the Bowman Bay and Cornet Bay nearshore restoration projects. Thousands of people attended the event, which gave Skagit MRC a lot of really great exposure. In addition to sharing Skagit MRC's project information, our booth included the Northwest Straits Foundation's derelict crab pots/crabber outreach display activity, the scuba diver photo booth and the forage fish bean bag toss game.

Nearshore Monitoring Update Presentation, Jason Morgan

Jason presented an update on nearshore monitoring at Skagit MRC restoration sites including Bowman Bay and Shannon Point. This project has been a collaborative effort involving multiple partners. Jason worked closely with Jason Toft from the University of Washington/Sea Grant to develop the monitoring plans and protocols for the restoration sites using the "[Decision Tree: Protocols in the Shoreline Monitoring Toolbox](#)" as a guideline. The monitoring parameters include: beach profiles, large woody debris, beach wrack, surface epifauna and algae, forage fish spawning, nearshore fish use (beach seining) and insect fallout. The monitoring plans were hypotheses driven and designed to determine the effectiveness of the restoration projects and learn more about the effects of shoreline armoring.

Nearshore monitoring is volunteer-driven. Just this past year, forty-one volunteers contributed over 500 hours of service to nearshore monitoring. Not only did volunteers help with field work, they also helped with trainings,

coordination, construction and maintenance of monitoring supplies, lab work, data entry, quality control, and education and outreach. We are lucky to have such an awesome volunteer base right here in Skagit County! Not only does it give us a lot more capacity to do the work that we wouldn't be able to do otherwise, it also helps generate community support.

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and University of Washington (UW) assisted with some of our shoreline surveys and collected additional monitoring data, in order to obtain a better understanding of the effects of shoreline armoring and shoreline armoring removal projects on a regional scale throughout Puget Sound. WDFW and UW recently completed their field season and are in the process of compiling the 2016 field data, including ours. Monitoring data will be ready to share with the MRC sometime in January.

Pre-restoration monitoring at Shannon Point continued through June 2016, but has since ceased until the City of Anacortes finalizes their plans for their trail design because it could impact our nearshore restoration plans. The first year of post construction monitoring at Bowman Bay is now complete. Jason hopes to keep monitoring at Bowman Bay for another four years, but it will depend on available funding. The Foundation was able to secure enough funding to continue monitoring at Bowman Bay for at least one more year. The Samish Indian Nation's Natural Resources Division will be helping Jason with the beach seining at Bowman Bay this winter to help out with the costs of monitoring.

Salish Sea Stewards Presentation, *Samantha Russell*

Samantha Russell presented a summary of the 2016 Salish Sea Stewards program. The 40 hour training program occurred one day a week starting March 14 through May 17, 2016 for a period of 10 weeks. The 19 participants who completed the training were asked to commit to at least 50 hours of volunteer service to MRC or other partner projects. To date, the 19 new Salish Sea Stewards have already contributed over 262 hours of service to MRC projects and over 801 hours to support other Coastal Volunteer Partnership (CVP) projects, for a total of over 1000 hours since May, 2016. That is very impressive!!

As a follow-up to the training, Salish Sea Stewards graduates were asked to complete a survey to help evaluate the program. One of the objectives of the training was to increase the visibility of the Skagit MRC. Before the course, only one class participant had heard of the MRC. After completing the 10 week course, all participants were familiar with the MRC, and the work we do. Survey results also indicated that the participants felt that the course was relevant to what they wanted to learn about the Salish Sea and that it prepared them to volunteer for Skagit MRC projects.

The CVP holds monthly socials to help volunteers feel connected and engaged. CVP recently hosted a volunteer appreciation potluck celebration at Padilla Bay. They had a really great turnout of over 30 people! Together those 30 volunteers had over 2,000 hours of service just in 2016!! Awards were given to volunteers for their contributions.

Planning is under way for next year's training. The 40 hour training program will start March 7, 2017 and continue for 10 weeks through May 9, 2017. Classes will be held Tuesdays, 1:00pm-5:00pm at Padilla Bay. Applications will be accepted starting in December.

MRC members thanked Samantha for doing such a wonderful job recruiting volunteers and keeping them energized and engaged. The Coastal Volunteer Partnership is proving to be a great model for marine focused environmental volunteerism. Having the volunteers administered under one umbrella has been very beneficial to the MRC and other like-minded organizations that rely heavily on volunteers.

Project Status & Discussion

- **Bowman Bay Nearshore Restoration:** The interpretive signs will be installed soon. The sign unveiling will likely be held in mid November. Bill Bailey, a Master Carver for the Samish Indian Nation, rescued a tiny cedar tree and raised it until it was about six feet tall. Last week they planted it at Bowman Bay as part of the beach restoration. The planting was followed by a ceremony and celebration. There was a great article about the planting in the October issue of the Deception Pass Park Foundation's newsletter "The Current".
- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** Save the Date! The date for Fidalgo Bay Day 2017 has been set for: Saturday, **August 12, 2017**. The Fidalgo Bay RV Resort has been reserved. The date had to be moved to an earlier date in August because no other dates in September would work and it was the only date in August that the Shannon Point Marine Center's Touch Tank would be available. Pete is looking for another MRC member to Co-Chair the event. Please let Pete know if you are interested. Pete is also looking for some new ideas for different kid's activities.
- **Olympia Oyster Restoration:** The final report was submitted and shared with the MRC. The report covered the last four years of Skagit MRC's Olympia oyster restoration work which has been a huge success in Fidalgo Bay. Fidalgo Bay now has over 4 million native oysters! With the new shell plots, the amount of oysters has

substantially increased over the last two years. New sites for distributing additional shell substrate along the west side of Fidalgo Bay are currently being investigated. Paul will be giving a presentation on Olympia oyster restoration at the upcoming MRC conference in Port Townsend. The Olympia oyster restoration manuscript that Paul co-authored was recently accepted for publication by the Journal of Ecology! Paul is now working on a new manuscript that will cover all fourteen years of native oyster restoration work.

- **Pinto Abalone Restoration:** The final report was shared with the MRC. Josh Bouma will present to the MRC at a future meeting.
- **Kelp Monitoring:** The Northwest Straits Initiative is hosting a Kelp Workshop in Port Townsend this Friday. Phyllis, Bob, and Samantha plan to attend the workshop. Bob and Samantha conducted surveys in July, August, and September. They surveyed kelp beds near Shannon Point in July. In August and September they surveyed kelp beds at Coffin Rocks, Bowman Bay. Coffin Rocks turned out to be a much better location for volunteers to survey than Shannon Point. Kelp monitoring will be included in the 2017 Salish Sea Stewards training curriculum. The kayak that was donated will be available to volunteers who are interested in helping with kelp monitoring.
- **Forage Fish Index Site Surveys:** Skagit County intern Charlette Turman and Rachel Price from Shell Refinery, continue to conduct forage fish surveys at the Ship Harbor and Similk Bay index sites. Two eggs were found at Ship Harbor and Bowman Bay. The third index site will likely be at the Fidalgo Bay property recently purchased by the Skagit Land Trust and will be part of Charlette's class project with Skagit Valley College. The MRC conference in Port Townsend will include a session on the importance of Northwest Straits Initiative forage fish surveys in Puget Sound.

Miscellaneous Events and Announcements:

- **Shell Anacortes Refinery Unloading Facility Project Canceled:** Shell recently canceled the rail unloading facility project, due to economic factors. State and County agencies have ceased all work on the environmental impact statement for the project. There will be no more public meetings for the project.
- **Rockfish Recovery Plan- Public Meeting:** October 19th, 7:00PM, City Council Chambers, Anacortes City Hall.
- **Armoring on Salish Sea Shorelines: Documented Impacts and Implications for Future Actions:** Tuesday, October 18, 12:00PM - 1:00PM at Friday Harbor Labs, or WebEx.
- **Friends of Skagit Beaches Films with Friends:** Films are held at the NW Ed. Services Dist Bldg. 1601 R. Ave Anacortes. Doors open at 6:30PM for popcorn, drinks; Film screenings begin at 7:00PM. For more information visit: <http://skagitbeaches.org/ourwork/film-series.html>.
 - Friday, October 14 – “*Salmon Confidential*”. Watch the trailer at www.vimeo.com/64847457.
 - Friday, October 28- Double Feature! “*A Simple Question, The Story of Straw*”. Watch the trailer at www.vimeo.com/7051769. And “*Nature’s Orchestra*”. Watch the trailer at <https://youtu.be/pdqBUXyZPF4>. Caroline Gibson, Executive Director of the Northwest Straits Foundation, will introduce the Foundation’s Bowman Bay nearshore restoration video as well as their derelict crab pot educational videos.
 - Friday, November 1 – “*Sonic Sea*”. Watch the trailer at <http://www.sonicsea.org/film>.
- **Salish Sea Risk Mitigation Workshop:** October 18 and 19, 2016 in Bellingham. Many different stakeholders will be attending. The goal of the workshop is to identify and prioritize risk mitigation measures for reducing and preventing oil spills from vessel traffic in the Salish Sea.

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 AM. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, November 10, 2016, at the Skagit County Administration Building in Mount Vernon.



SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the **November 10, 2016** Skagit County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) meeting, held at the Skagit County Administration Building in Mount Vernon

Attendees:

- **MRC Members Attending:** Tracy Alker, Jay Lind, Sarah Tchang, Phyllis Bravinder, Nathan Biletnikoff, Paul Dinnel, Todd Woodard, Morty Cohen, Kit Rawson, Betsy Stevenson, Jamey Selleck
- **MRC Members Absent:** Julie Barber, Matt Reynolds
- **Others Attending:** Lisa Kaufman, NWSF; Samantha Russell, CVP; Rachel Price, Shell Puget Sound Refinery

Call to Order and Introduction: Jay Lind called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and opened the meeting with introductions.

Approval of Minutes: The October 13, 2016, MRC meeting minutes were approved as written.

Public Comments: Todd Woodard reported that there is now a Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Anacortes and the Washington State Department of Natural Resources that gives the green light to begin looking for funding for the replacement of the Fidalgo Bay trestle and removal of the causeway structure. This is a huge collaborative project that will likely take 5 to 10 years to complete. It will involve extensive outreach and input from the community. The Army Corps of Engineers will help with the design. There is potential to get some nearshore restoration work built into the design of this project. Todd said they are going to start collecting letters of support soon and will be reaching out to the MRC.

Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Report: *Jamey Selleck*

- **Gubernatorial Candidate Forum:** Jamey Selleck and Nan McKay represented the NWSC at the Gubernatorial Candidate Forum held at the Seattle Aquarium on October 13, 2016. There was a good turnout with many environmental nonprofit organizations and the Puget Sound Partnership. Jamey and Nan had an opportunity to briefly meet with Governor Jay Inslee who voiced continued support of the Puget Sound Partnership. Unfortunately, the EPA budget has been significantly reduced which has trickled down to budget cuts at the Puget Sound Partnership and the NWSC. We will likely continue to face even greater budget cuts in the future. The NWSC is working to find other sources of funding to continue our work.
- **New NWSC Director Update:** The hiring committee narrowed down the pool of applicants to three candidates who will be asked to present at a special Commission meeting in early December. They hope to have the new Director in place by January 1, 2017. Ginny plans to stay until the transition of the new Director is complete.
- **Biennial State Funding Request:** The External Relations Committee drafted a letter to the legislators requesting biennial state funding for the NWSC and MRCs. The total request amount was for \$455,000. Each MRC would receive \$32,500 for three key project areas: protect forage fish to help support salmon restoration; map and monitor kelp beds; and native Olympia oyster restoration.
- **Additional Funding Proposals:** The Commission staff and Foundation staff worked collaboratively to draft a letter of interest to NOAA for grant funding to develop a kelp recovery plan. Lucas Hart also wrote a letter of intent to NOAA to apply for grant funding for forage fish projects.
- **Next NWSC Meeting:** is currently being rescheduled for early December.

Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) Report: *Jay Lind*

- **NWSF Funding:** The Foundation cobbled together other sources of funding to support nearshore monitoring in Skagit County. The Foundation also recently applied for Tesoro grant funding for the following: a native oyster restoration workshop to develop protocols for the NWSI; nearshore monitoring; and additional planting at Bowman Bay.
- **NWSF Board Member Update:** Anne Murphy and Betsy Lyons were recently appointed as the newest board members.

- **MRC Celebration:** Jerry Masters, the Foundation's President, has offered to sponsor a party for each of the MRCs. Jerry recently sponsored a party for the Snohomish MRC at a winery in Woodinville. Jay asked the Committee to start thinking about a location to have our own celebration. So far, Jay has looked into possibly having it at Max Dales in Mount Vernon and the Farm House restaurant along HWY20. Both have rooms that can be reserved for private parties. It was suggested the MRC consider having it at a local restaurant in La Conner. Seeds and Nell Thorn might be good choices since they are both locally owned and offer locally sourced fare right from the Skagit Valley. Another option might be to have it at Maple Hall in La Conner, or at a yacht club. The Committee agreed that it would probably be best to wait to have the celebration until sometime after the holidays. Please contact Jay if you have any suggestions about where to have it or if you would like to help with planning.

MRC Conference Follow-Up Discussion

The annual MRC conference was recently held in Port Townsend on November 4-5. MRC members agreed that this year's conference was worthwhile and many left feeling a little more inspired and energized. The conference was well attended with participants representing very diverse interest groups. The conference agenda included lots of great presentations covering a wide variety of topics. Conference presentations will be posted on the NWSC website: <http://www.nwstraits.org/2016-mrc-conference>.

The film "Sonic Sea" was one of the conference highlights. The film was about man-made noise pollution in our oceans and its impacts on marine life. It was a real eye-opener! To watch the movie trailer go to: <http://www.sonicsea.org/film>. The film was followed by a very engaging panel discussion. There was a lot of interest in identifying different ways for the Northwest Straits Initiative/MRCs to get involved. One suggestion was to help spread the message through education and outreach and social media.

Although the conference provided plenty of networking opportunities and discussions with the other MRCs, many felt that it didn't really provide a good sense of what the other MRCs are currently working on. It is important for the MRCs to understand the collective value of what we do as a whole under the NWSI so that we can better communicate it to others. It was suggested that maybe next year, each of the MRCs give a presentation on a project they are working on. Another suggestion was to provide a more structured opportunity for other MRCs to get together to discuss specific projects or other topics of interest. Being able to share ideas and finding ways to collaborate well help us achieve a greater collective impact.

MRC Communications Discussion

The Committee discussed the value of communication and messaging in order to increase awareness about who we are and what we do. It is important to have clear and consistent messaging that is vetted through the NWSI and MRC. Sasha can probably help with this. The Committee talked about writing short articles about our work on a regular basis. The Committee will need to agree on the topics, formatting, and messaging. There needs to be a project lead and at least one or two people should be assigned to help review the articles before they get submitted. Sasha can help send the link to our articles through various forms of social media so that it gets broadcasted to a wider audience. Jamey suggested that we should add this communications/outreach topic to our monthly meeting agenda to make sure we don't lose momentum. Lisa offered to contact Ron Judd from the Seattle Times to see if he would be willing to come and talk to our group about how to write a good article. In addition, Samantha will invite Kimberly Cauvel from the Skagit Valley Herald and Betsy will invite Bronlea, Skagit County's public information officer, so that we could have a round table discussion at our January MRC meeting.

Administrative Report, Tracy Alker:

- **2016-2017 MRC Grant:** The MRC grant has been signed with a start date of October 1, 2016 through September 30, 2017. Grant funding for the MRCs is the same amount as last year, \$70,000. However, because Skagit MRC had to drop the Nearshore Monitoring project from the MRC grant proposal, our overall budget is now only \$64,000. The remaining amount will go back to the Commission to help offset some of their recent budget cuts. Fortunately, the Foundation was able to secure additional funding to help support the nearshore monitoring project. The Samish Indian Nation will help with beach seining at Bowman Bay to help reduce costs.

- **MRC Elections:** Elections for a new MRC Chair and Vice Chair will be held at the January MRC meeting. MRC members were asked to start thinking about who they would like to nominate. Jamey is also seeking an alternate representative for the NWSC to attend the meetings in his absence.

Rockfish Recovery Plan, Jamey Selleck

Total rockfish abundance in Puget Sound has declined approximately 70 percent in the last 40 years. In 2010, bocaccio (*Sebastes paucispinis*) and yelloweye rockfish (*Sebastes ruberrimus*) in the Puget Sound/Georgia Basin were listed as endangered and threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Canary rockfish was recently delisted under the ESA threatened status because it was determined that they are not genetically different from the canary rockfish found off the coast where populations are doing well.

NOAA Fisheries is seeking public comment on its draft Rockfish Recovery Plan for yelloweye rockfish and bocaccio in the Puget Sound/Georgia Basin. The public comment period ends **November 14**. The draft recovery plan identifies threats to the species and specific actions to address those threats. It also identifies research needed to help better understand the current status and the impacts of the threats to the species.

Four public meetings were held: Olympia, San Juans, Anacortes, and Seattle. Jamey attended the public meeting that was recently held in Seattle. To review the Draft Rockfish Recovery Plan update, go to:

http://www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov/publications/recovery_planning/other_species/yelloweye_rockfish_and_bocaccio_draft_recovery_plan.pdf.

For more information about rockfish recovery:

http://www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov/protected_species/rockfish/rockfish_in_puget_sound.html.

Project Status & Discussion

- **Bowman Bay Nearshore Restoration:** The interpretive signs have been installed. The beautiful illustrations were done by an artist from Port Townsend. The final Bowman Bay Nearshore Restoration Celebration will be held next Thursday, November 17 at 2:30PM. A planting party will take place at 1:30PM, prior to the celebration. 80 plants will be planted along the shoreline. There was a great article about the upcoming celebration in the latest issue of the Deception Pass Park Foundation's newsletter "The Current". Lisa pointed out that we have a ten year commitment to maintain the Bowman Bay nearshore restoration site. The Foundation only has enough funding to maintain the plants at the site for one more month. It will take at least five years for the plants to become well established at the site. The goal is to have a least an 80% survival rate of the plants. Lisa is looking for a core group of volunteers who would be willing to become stewards of the site. The volunteers would be responsible for watering, weeding, planting, and monitoring the plants on a regular basis.
- **Washington Park Interpretive Signage:** Erica Pickett has been communicating with the City of Anacortes regarding our proposal to install interpretive signage at Washington Park. They are in full support of the project. The purpose of the signage is to inform visitors about the fragile tide pool ecosystem and proper beach etiquette to help protect it. Erica said that she can no longer be the lead on this project, so Jay and Tracy are seeking other volunteers who might be interested in joining the subcommittee to help plan the sign. Tracy is currently in the process of drafting a Request for Proposals (RFP) to hire an artist to do the illustration. A subcommittee meeting will be scheduled soon to discuss the RFP and scope of work.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** Save the Date! The date for Fidalgo Bay Day 2017 has been set for: Saturday, **August 12, 2017**. The Fidalgo Bay RV Resort has been reserved. Pete is looking for another MRC member to Co-Chair the event. Planning is underway. Kids activity planning will begin right after the New Year. Save the Date cards will be printed soon so that they will be available for the Friends of Skagit Beaches' lecture series and the Storming the Sound event in January.
- **Salish Sea Stewards:** The Salish Sea Stewards training is a Skagit MRC program that is coordinated and administered through the Coastal Volunteer Partnership. The Salish Sea Stewards subcommittee (i.e. Pete, Phyllis, Morty, Tracy, and Samantha) had a meeting earlier this week to continue the planning process for the upcoming Salish Sea Stewards training. For this year's training we are trying something new. We are going to try to set up a mentoring program for the new volunteers. Some of the more experienced volunteers from previous

classes will be assigned to a small group of new volunteers to help mentor. The hope is that the mentoring program will help the new and old volunteers feel more connected and keep everyone more engaged. Training will start March 7, 2017 through May 7, 2017 for a ten week period. Classes will be held Tuesdays from 1:00PM to 5:00PM at Padilla Bay. MRC members will be asked to help with the training. MRC members are also encouraged to attend the first class to meet the new volunteers and show support. A potluck will be held from 4:00PM – 6:00PM after the first class. Registration for the training will begin December 1st. Applications will be made available on the Coastal Volunteer Partnership's and Skagit MRC's websites. The training will be promoted in the very popular "A Town is My Town" publication. Six people have already signed up for the 2017 class!

- **Olympia Oyster Restoration:** Paul gave an excellent presentation on Olympia oyster restoration at the MRC conference in Port Townsend. A lot of great discussions and networking occurred following the presentation. There will likely be a follow-up workshop on native oyster restoration. Paul received permission to transfer oyster shell from areas that are too high for oyster spawning in Fidalgo Bay to the west side of Fidalgo Bay near Weaverling Spit. Paul will recruit volunteers to help collect buckets of shell and transport them by boat to Weaverling Spit sometime in the spring.
- **Pinto Abalone Restoration:** The sub-award agreement with the Puget Sound Restoration Fund has been signed. Josh Bouma has been invited to give a presentation at the December MRC meeting. Approximately 1000 additional abalone seed will be planted at the six sites in Skagit County. Pinto abalone seeding and monitoring will likely take place in the winter/early spring because it is the optimal time for the best visibility after the kelp and algae have died back.
- **Kelp Monitoring:** The Northwest Straits Initiative's Kelp Workshop was held in Port Townsend on November 1. It was originally supposed to be held October 14, but had to be rescheduled due to inclement weather. Unfortunately, nobody from Skagit County was able to attend the workshop. The purpose of the workshop was to discuss survey goals, 2016 survey results, data integration into Sound IQ, address volunteer concerns and steps for making improvements. The kayak-based kelp monitoring protocols are currently being reviewed to try to figure out why there were several inconsistencies in data collection between the volunteers and how the protocols can be better refined. Bob Weathers and Samantha Russell conducted surveys in July, August, and September. Suzanne Shull will post the data on Sound IQ. Kelp monitoring will be included in the 2017 Salish Sea Stewards training curriculum to try to recruit more volunteers to help with this project. It was suggested that the Hole in the Wall Kayak club might also be a great place to recruit experienced kayakers. If more volunteers are interested in helping, we will be able to expand the monitoring to other locations. The kayak that was donated to the Coastal Volunteer Partnership will be available to volunteers who are interested in helping with kelp monitoring. Volunteers who want to use the kayak will have to sign a waiver. Todd suggested volunteers also take a kayak safety training class. Jay pointed out that the kayak rental place at Bowman Bay offers kayak safety training. Todd said that he also provides training to his staff members and could potentially extend it to volunteers.
- **Nearshore Monitoring:** Monitoring is starting to wind down for the year. We now have one year's worth of monitoring data that is currently being compiled and analyzed. The Samish Indian Nation will help with the beach seining at Bowman Bay this fall and winter. Lisa and Jason are considering providing fish ID training for volunteers instead of another beach seining training. Volunteers can easily learn the beach seining techniques while in the field, whereas, learning how to identify fish takes more time and can seem a little more intimidating to some volunteers. The fish ID training would likely take place for half a day in February or March. Jamey noted that the Puget Sound Partnership created several fact sheets to help showcase project success stories for protecting and restoring Puget Sound. The fact sheets directly connect effectiveness monitoring data to recovery actions and lessons learned. They can be accessed on PSP's website: <http://www.psp.wa.gov/evaluating-effective-action.php>. A fact sheet has already been created for the Weaverling Spit project and PSP has expressed interest in producing fact sheets for the March's Point and Bowman Bay restoration projects as well.
- **Forage Fish Index Site Surveys:** Sampling continues once a month at Guemes Channel (Ship Harbor) in two places and in two places at the NE side of Similk Bay. There is a potential third index site located on the SW part of Samish Island (a piece of beach owned by the Padilla Bay Reserve) that is currently being considered. Pete plans to do a site visit to take pictures and devise a plan sometime in November. Surf smelt eggs were found in Similk Bay during the first survey in Oct. Those samples were sent to the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) for confirmation and staging. We have a wonderful group of dedicated volunteers who

continue to help with the surveys. Rachel Price from Shell has been a huge help as well. Pete reported that they had an informal session with other MRC Index site leads at the MRC Conference. Most MRCs are participating in the Index site surveys, but all are at different stages. WDFW, in partnership with the NWSC, will be conducting a one day forage fish training at Padilla Bay on Nov. 15. There is still plenty of space available. Contact Lucas if you are interested in attending.

Miscellaneous Events and Announcements:

- **Friends of Skagit Beaches Film Series:**
 - Friday, November 11 – “*Sonic Sea*”. Watch the trailer at <http://www.sonicsea.org/film>. Films are held at the NW Ed. Services Dist Bldg. 1601 R. Ave Anacortes. Doors open at 6:30PM for popcorn, drinks; Film screenings begin at 7:00PM. For more information visit: <http://skagitbeaches.org/ourwork/film-series.html>.

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 AM. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, December 8, 2016, at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort in Anacortes.



SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the **December 10, 2016** Skagit County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) meeting, held at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort in Anacortes

Attendees:

- **MRC Members Attending:** Tracy Alker, Jay Lind, Sarah Tchang, Phyllis Bravinder, Paul Dinnel, Todd Woodard, Morty Cohen, Kit Rawson, Jamey Selleck, Matt Reynolds
- **MRC Members Absent:** Julie Barber, Nathan Biletnikoff, Betsy Stevenson
- **Others Attending:** Samantha Russell, CVP; Maddie Rose, CVP; Suzanne Shull, PBNERR; Josh Bouma, PSRF

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 November 10, 2016, MRC meeting minutes were approved as written.

Public Comments:

- **Climate Change and Our Natural Resources Report:** Kit Rawson shared a copy of the *Climate Change and Our Natural Resources* report from the NW Treaty Tribes in western Washington. It is a comprehensive report on how climate change is hurting tribal treaty rights and natural resources. The report can be found online at: <http://nwtreatytribes.org/climatechange/>. Kit will email a copy of the report to Tracy to share with the rest of the MRC and will provide hard copies for those who are interested.
- **Other County MRC Meetings:** Jay Lind recently attended MRC meetings in six out of the seven counties. The last one was the Clallam County MRC. Their meetings are run very similar to ours. Clallam's agenda included an update on their Local Integrating Organization (LIO). The last one Jay plans to attend will be in San Juan County. Jay will share information about our pinto abalone and green crab projects.
- **ECONet Conference:** Phyllis Bravinder reported on the ECONet Conference that took place in Burien last week. Joe Gaydos was the keynote speaker. There were several breakout sessions and lots of opportunities to network. Over 100 people from many different affiliations attended the event. Phyllis noted that most people who attended the event never heard of the MRCs.

Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Report: *Jamey Selleck*

- **New NWSC Director Update:** A second round of interviews recently took place. The three finalists provided presentations at a special Commission meeting on December 5th. The next step will be to contact references and do background checks. They hope to have the new Director in place by early January.
- **NWSC Funding:** EPA funding for the NWSC and MRCs will last into 2018. Jamey noted that it will likely be more difficult to secure the same base EPA funding in the future. 2017-2018 MRC project planning will begin in February 2017. MRCs will be asked to present a new project proposal at the April NWSC meeting.
- **Next NWSC Meeting:** December 9th, WebEx 10:00AM – 12:00PM.

Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) Report: *Jay Lind*

- **NWSF Funding:** The Foundation is seeking additional private funders. There is a year-end appeal for those who have donated in the past. Jay suggested the MRC try to increase public exposure in order to appeal to a broader range of contributors.
- **MRC Opportunity Fund:** The Opportunity Fund has \$53,000 in the bank. Seventy-thousand is needed in order to give each MRC \$10,000. Some proposals, if approved, may only receive partial funding. MRC proposals are currently under review and should be completed by the end of the year. Skagit MRC submitted an application to expand the invasive green crab monitoring effort throughout Skagit County with the help of citizen scientists.

Pinto Abalone Recovery: *Josh Bouma*

Josh Bouma is a shellfish biologist for the Puget Sound Restoration Fund (PSRF) and project manager for the pinto abalone recovery effort. Pinto abalone recovery is a collaborative effort that involves many different partners and

sources of funding. Josh expressed his appreciation to the Skagit MRC for the support they have given to the abalone work over the last couple of years.

Since 1992, pinto abalone populations have significantly declined. The population decline is most likely due to recreational harvest pressure and illegal poaching. Despite closing the recreational fishery in 1994, the pinto abalone population continued to decline. In 2004 pinto abalone was federally listed as a "Species of Concern." Pinto abalone recovery is important for many reasons. The pinto abalone is the only native abalone species in Washington State. They are culturally significant to native tribes. Ecologically they play an important role as ecosystem engineers by grazing kelp forests which maintains and clears the rocky reef habitat for settlement of other invertebrates and kelp species. They also have some economic value, particularly with dive tourism.

WDFW began survey work in the 1990's, and established 10 permanent index stations in the San Juan Islands. Data indicates that the population has declined by almost 90% at these survey sites since monitoring began. Since 2003, PSRF's main recovery strategy is the monitoring and outplanting of healthy, genetically diverse, hatchery-reared juvenile abalone to create a self-sustaining reproductive population in the wild. Monitoring and juvenile seeding is ongoing. Skagit sites are now above the minimum density threshold for spawning. Cryptic juveniles are beginning to emerge.

Josh requested the MRC allow PSRF to use a small chunk of the funding in their contract to include the experimental seeding of younger abalone. Seeding abalone at a younger age, if successful, will help save a year's worth of resources at the hatchery. Because seeding fits within the scope of the grant and no additional funding or contract amendment will be needed, the consensus of the Committee was to approve Josh's request.

Administrative Report: Tracy Alker

- **MRC Administrative Support:** Tracy reported that a good chunk of her time will need to start going towards the Lake Management Districts over the next several months so she will have a little less time to spend on MRC tasks through September. Skagit County intern Charlette Turman will help with the monthly MRC meeting minutes and other administrative tasks as needed.
- **MRC Grant Reports Due- January 17:** Quarterly progress reports are due January 17th. Please don't forget to report your volunteer hours and provide any project updates. We need to report how our funds for each project are leveraged through volunteer hours, in-kind support, and additional grant funding.
- **MRC Elections:** Elections for a new MRC Chair, Vice Chair, and NWSC Alternate Representative will be held at the January MRC meeting.

Project Status & Discussion

- **Bowman Bay Nearshore Restoration:** The Bowman Bay nearshore restoration celebration and unveiling of the interpretive signage took place on November 17. Around 40 people came to show their support. Several volunteers arrived early to help plant 80 plants along the shoreline. The event agenda included the history of Bowman Bay, project overview, partnerships and involvement, nearshore monitoring with citizen scientists, and recognition of funders and volunteers. There was a great article about the event on the front page of the [Skagit Valley Herald on November 18th](#) and in the latest issue of the Deception Pass Park Foundation's newsletter "The Current".



- **Washington Park Interpretive Signage:** Jay, Tracy, and Samantha met with Bob Vaux, the Washington Park Manager, earlier this week to talk about the scope of work and potential locations for the signage. MRC grant funding will likely only be enough for one sign. The City will try to find matching funds to purchase a second sign. The first sign will be installed near the tide pool at Sunset Beach. Depending on funding, the second sign will be installed at West Beach. Tracy is currently in the process of drafting a Request for Quotes (RFQ) to hire an artist to do the illustration.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** The date for Fidalgo Bay Day 2017 has been set for: Saturday, **August 12, 2017** at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort. Contact Pete if you would like to help with planning the event or if you would be interested in

being the co-chair. Planning is underway. Save the Date cards will be available for the Friends of Skagit Beaches' lecture series and the Storming the Sound event in January.

- **Salish Sea Stewards:** Registration for the Salish Sea Stewards training is open from December 1 through February 28th. Space is limited to the first 30 applicants. Applications can be downloaded from Skagit MRC's website. Seven people have already signed up for the 2017 class! The Salish Sea Stewards subcommittee (i.e. Pete, Phyllis, Morty, Tracy, and Samantha) will be meeting in December to continue the planning process for the upcoming Salish Sea Stewards training. Training will start March 7, 2017 through May 7, 2017 for a ten week period. Classes will be held Tuesdays from 1:00PM to 5:00PM at Padilla Bay. A potluck will be held from 4:00PM – 6:00PM after the first class.
- **Olympia Oyster Restoration:** Work won't begin again until the spring. Oyster shell will be placed along the west side of Fidalgo Bay near Weaverling spit to provide habitat for Olympia oyster larval settlement. Monitoring oyster shell bags will continue at Fidalgo Bay and Cypress Island. Paul shared a new publication in Ecology titled: Coast-wide recruitment dynamics of Olympia oysters reveal limited synchrony and multiple predictors of failure. Paul Dinnel represented Skagit MRC as one of 17 co-authors on this paper for our long time Olympia oyster work in Fidalgo Bay!
- **Kelp Monitoring:** On December 15th, Suzanne Shull will give a presentation on NWSC's Sound IQ and how this mapping tool can be used to share citizen science data for projects like bull kelp monitoring project and forage fish surveys. The presentation is part of the Coastal Volunteer Partnership's (CVP) social Coffee Hour that occurs on the third Thursday of each month from 10-11:30AM at Padilla Bay.
- **Nearshore Monitoring:** Samish Indian Nation's Department of Natural Resources staff will take over the monthly beach seining monitoring at Bowman Bay for a few months to help the NWSF reduce costs.
- **Forage Fish Index Site Surveys:** No update.
- **European Green Crab Monitoring:** Skagit MRC recently applied for the Northwest Straits Foundation's Opportunity Funds to expand the invasive green crab monitoring effort throughout Skagit County with the help of citizen scientists. Some of the funding would be used to pay for Samantha Russell's time for volunteer coordination. The rest would be used to purchase traps and other supplies. Washington Sea Grant and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) staff will provide green crab monitoring training for the volunteers sometime in February. The workshop will likely be held at Padilla Bay. A meeting for all of the regional stakeholders was held at Padilla Bay on November 29th to discuss how to coordinate efforts to increase the scale of monitoring in the area. Paul Dinnel drafted a Green Crab Monitoring Plan for Skagit County that is currently under review by the Crab Team.

Miscellaneous Events and Announcements:

- **Annual Deception Pass Dash-** December 10-11, 2016. Bowman Bay's annual 6-mile paddle through Deception Pass on kayaks, canoes, and standup paddle boards. For more information: <https://www.outdooradventurecenter.com/adventure/deception-pass-dash/>.
- **Skagit Green Drinks-** December 15, 5:30-7:30PM at Farmstrong Brewing Company in Mount Vernon. Skagit "Green Drinks is an informal networking event for the environmentally conscious community in Skagit County community". For more information contact: skagitgreendrinks@gmail.com.
- **Bowman Bay Holiday Event -** Dec 16 – 17, 4:00-7:00PM. A holiday fundraiser for the Deception Pass Park Foundation with holiday lights in the park, crafts for kids, music, Santy, holiday gifts, food and drinks.
- **Skagit ECONet Meeting-** January 17, 2017, 2:30 – 4:30PM at the Padilla Bay Reserve. ECO Net stands for Education, Communication, and Outreach Network. For more information: <http://www.skagitchleanwater.org/skagiteconet/>.
- **Storming the Sound-** January 26, 2017, 9:00AM-4:30PM at Maple Hall in La Conner. For more information: <http://www.padillabay.gov/storming/>.

The meeting adjourned at 11:03 AM. The next MRC meeting will be held **Thursday, January 12, 2017, at the Skagit County Administration Building in Mount Vernon.**