



SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the **January 12, 2017** 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, Paul Dinnel, Todd Woodard, Morty Cohen, Jamey Selleck, Matt Reynolds, Julie Barber, Nathan Biletchnikoff, Betsy Stevenson, Kari Odden (Kit's alternate)
- **MRC Members Absent:** Kit Rawson
- **Others Attending:** Pete Haase (Morty's alternate); Stephanie Fraser, SCPW; Lisa Kaufman, NWSF; Rich Carlson, USFWS; Ron Judd, Seattle Times; Kevin Aitkin, USFWS; Erica Bleke, DNR; Sasha Horst, 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 December 8, 2016, MRC meeting minutes were approved as written.

Public Comments:

- The public comment period for the Marbled Murrelet Long-Term Conservation Strategy Environmental Impact Statement is open until March 9th. Comments can be submitted on the Washington Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) website. <http://www.dnr.wa.gov/mmltcs>.
- The public comment period is also still open for the expansion of the gravel pit on the Samish River near Grip road. More information can be found on the County website: <http://www.skagitcounty.net/Departments/PlanningAndPermit/gravelmine.htm>.
- There was an inquiry about the EPA's new human health water quality criteria for Washington State. More information can be found on Ecology's website: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/ruledev/wac173201A/1203time.html> and the EPA fact sheet: https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-11/documents/washington_hhc_final_rule_fact_sheet_508c.pdf.

MRC Officer Elections: Jay Lind

After acknowledging that we had a quorum, the Committee elected the following MRC officers:

- Jamey Selleck, MRC Chair
- Sarah Tchang, Vice-Chair
- Nathan Biletchnikoff, NWSC Alternate

The vote for each MRC officer was unanimous. Jamey pointed out that he will also continue to serve as the primary NWSC Representative for one more year.

MRC Outreach and Communications: Ron Judd

Ron Judd, a reporter for The Seattle Times provided journalistic advice on how the MRC can increase exposure of the work we do. He spoke about what is newsworthy and what is not, and how we can appeal to reporters to help tell our story. Ron suggested that we appoint a contact person from the MRC who would coordinate getting our stories out to the press. It would be a good idea to have written statements or talking points that are ready to go. Branding is also important. We need to make sure our message is clarified. A unique tagline or slogan would also help identify who we are and what type of work we do without 'boring' folks too much about the process. For example, the Northwest Straits Commission's tagline is "Partners in Marine Conservation". Our stories should highlight our successes and the positive impacts on the community. One idea is to do stories that focus on individual volunteers and why the MRC project is important to them. Ron recommended looking into the possibility of getting a college student to help with the branding and story writing.

Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Report: Jamey Selleck

- **New NWSC Director Update:** The Commission welcomes their new director, Rich Childers. Rich served as the shellfish policy lead with the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife since 2000. The Commission bids a fond farewell to Ginny Broadhurst who served 13 years with the NWSC, including nine years as director.
- **Next NWSC Meeting:** January 27, 10:00am -3:00pm at the Dungeness River Audubon Center in Sequim.

Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) Report: Jay Lind

- **Shoreline Landowner Outreach:** The NWSF was recently awarded Near-Term Action grant funding for several of their projects including the continuation of their Shoreline Landowner Outreach. The Foundation plans to continue the workshops, permitting assistance, site visits, and design. They are seeking input from the MRCs on how to help improve the program.
- **Derelict Crab Pot Removal:** The NWSF recently acquired funding to remove derelict crab pots from Guemes Channel. The funding was originally intended to be used for the Shannon Point project until that project was put on hold indefinitely. Jason also applied for additional grant funding to be used as a match to help support crab pot removal project.

Administrative Report: Tracy Alker

- **MRC Grant Reports Due- January 17:** Quarterly progress reports are due January 17th. Tracy thanked MRC members for submitting their volunteer hours and for providing project updates.

Project Status & Discussion

- **Bowman Bay Nearshore Restoration:** Recent winter storms caused some erosion and a loss of vegetation at the Bowman Bay restoration site. Luckily, the roots of the remaining dune grass are deep and extensive and are still holding strong. Student planting will be scheduled this spring through the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group. There is currently a team of around five stewardship volunteers who will help with routine plantings and plant maintenance.
- **Washington Park Interpretive Signage:** Jay, Tracy, Samantha Russell and Bob Vaux had a meeting last month at Washington Park 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 sent out a Request for Quotes (RFQ) to four different artists for the illustration, design and layout of the sign. Quotes are due January 23.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** The date for Fidalgo Bay Day 2017 has been set for: Saturday, **August 12, 2017** at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort. Planning is underway. Save the Date cards are now available and will be distributed at the Friends of Skagit Beaches' lecture series and the Storming the Sound event in January. Pete is seeking ideas for a youth craft project that would act as a tribute to Fidalgo Bay and that could be hung up at future events.
- **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. 14 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 next week 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.
- **Kelp Monitoring:** No updates. Monitoring will likely start up again sometime in June.
- **Nearshore Monitoring:** 2017 beach seining dates have been scheduled at Bowman Bay. Instead of providing beach seining training this year, which can easily be learned in the field, the NWSF will provide training on fish identification instead.
- **Forage Fish Index Site Surveys:** Forage fish index sites are being coordinated under the leadership of WDFW. Each county has two or three index sites that are being monitored monthly. In Skagit County, we have one site at Ship Harbor and another one in Similk Bay on the Swinomish Reservation. We will also be adding one more site

on Samish Island. Pete gave special recognition to Charlette Thurman, an intern for Skagit County Public Works, and Rachel Price from Shell. They've both been a huge help with the index site surveys. Pete also noted that we get a lot of volunteers from the surrounding counties who come and watch what we do and share ideas.

- **European Green Crab Monitoring:** Skagit MRC recently applied for and was awarded funding from the Northwest Straits Foundation's Opportunity Funds to expand the invasive green crab monitoring effort throughout Skagit County. Some of the funding would be used to pay for Samantha Russell's time for volunteer coordination. Funding for traps will be provided from other sources. Washington Sea Grant and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) staff will provide green crab monitoring training for the volunteers on February 17th at Padilla Bay.

Miscellaneous Events and Announcements:

- "Research and Insights of Northwest Coast Humpback, Blue, and Gray Whales and their Incursions Into the Salish Sea" - **Jan 20th** - Presented by John Calambokidis, research biologist, Cascadia Research Collective, Olympia WA. This lecture is part of the Friends of Skagit Beaches 2017 lecture series. The lectures are free and open to all ages. They are held Friday nights at 7:00PM at the NWESD Building, 1601 R Avenue, Anacortes. Click link to download a one page schedule for the [2017 Lecture Series full page.pdf](#).
- "A Plastic Ocean" Film Screening in Skagit – **Jan 25th**: Watch the trailer: <http://www.plasticoceans.org/watch-trailer/>. Presented by Children's Museum of Skagit County. They are planning a 'red carpet' photo area outside the theatre (in the mall) along with an educational activity for the kids starting at 6 p.m. The film will start at 6:30 p.m. and will be followed by a 30 minute Q & A with Emma Langson, Executive Director of The Plastic Oceans Foundation – Canada. There is a \$13 General Admission. Get tickets online at <https://www.tugg.com/events/a-plastic-ocean-zbwr>. All proceeds will benefit the Children's Museum. They will need to sell 98 tickets by January 17 to confirm the screening.
- Storming the Sound- January 26, 2017, 9:00AM-4:30PM at Maple Hall in La Conner. For more information: <http://www.padillabay.gov/storming/>.
- Skagit Green Crab Volunteer Training – Feb 17th: The crab team training workshop will be held at Padilla Bay on February 17th from 9-3pm. Please register using [this Google form](#). More information on [the event page](#).
- Free Oiled Wildlife HAZWOPER Training : February 11th 8am – 5pm in Port Angeles and March 18th 8am -5pm in Everett. To register : www.oilspills101.wa.gov.

The meeting adjourned at 11:20 AM. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, February 9, 2017, at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort in Anacortes



SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the **February 9, 2017** 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, Kit Rawson, Paul Dinnel, Todd Woodard, Morty Cohen, Jamey Selleck, Matt Reynolds, Julie Barber, Nathan Biletnikoff
- **MRC Members Absent:** Phyllis Bravinder, Betsy Stevenson
- **Others Attending:** Pete Haase (Morty's alternate); Tim Manns, SLT (Kit's alternate); Jude Apple, PBNERR; Nicole Casper, Swinomish (Julie's alternate); Samantha Russell, CVP; Madeline Rose, Salish Sea Steward

Call to Order and Introduction: Jamey Selleck called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. and opened the meeting with introductions.

Approval of Minutes: The January 12, 2017, MRC meeting minutes were approved as written.

Public Comments:

- **New Fish Passage Video:** Kit Rawson encouraged MRC members to watch the new fish passage video produced by the WA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X7z5anXzm0k>. It's a good video that gets people thinking about the issues of fish passage blockage and will hopefully inspire some to take action. Kit suggested the MRC consider creating a similar video regarding impacts of shoreline modification.

Coastal Blue Carbon Project at Padilla Bay: Jude Apple

Blue carbon is the carbon captured from the atmosphere and stored in coastal and marine ecosystems such as salt marshes and eelgrass meadows. These ecosystems sequester and store large quantities of blue carbon in both the plants and sediments. They can also be a source of carbon if these habitats are disturbed or modified. Determining carbon values in local ecosystems will enable coastal managers and planners to start including carbon sequestration when prioritizing restoration needs and considerations.

The research team at Padilla Bay recently received federal funding from NOAA to examine how the potential for carbon sequestration and long-term carbon storage varies across different habitats found within Padilla Bay. As part of the blue carbon research, sediment cores were taken from multiple sites within eelgrass habitat, mudflats, bald spots, and deep water sediments in Padilla Bay to determine how much carbon is stored in each habitat and how long it takes to accumulate. Results from the initial core study indicated that eelgrass reduces pH and captures carbon from the atmosphere then exports it to the mudflats and deep water, with mudflats containing the highest concentration of carbon.

The Pacific Northwest Blue Carbon Working Group (including Padilla Bay NERR, and several other agencies and academic/research institutions) recently applied for and received funding from NOAA's National Estuarine Research Reserve Science Collaborative grant program. The title of their collaborative project is "Enhancing Coastal Zone Policy Management and Research through End-User Driven Quantification and Public Dissemination of Carbon Stocks Data for Pacific Northwest Tidal Wetlands". This project will result in an inventory and quantification of carbon stock values for pristine versus restored or impacted marshes, generating a database of all these data, and working with the end-users to determine the best way to disseminate the data. The Pacific Northwest Blue Carbon Workgroup is one of several working groups formed under [The Blue Carbon Initiative](#). The Initiative is the first ever international program that is working collaboratively to mitigate climate change through the conservation and restoration of coastal and marine ecosystems.

Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Report: Jamey Selleck

- New NWSC Director: Rich Childers was recently hired as the new NWSC Director. Rich will transition to working full time for the Commission sometime in March or April.
- Puget Sound Partnership Update: Marc Daily will be leaving the Partnership in mid-February to serve as the new executive director of the Thurston County Planning Commission. Marc was serving as the Partnership's alternate on the NWSC.
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Funding Update: The EPA and NWSC are working hard to secure funding for 2017-2018 MRC/NWSC base funding.
- Net Pens: NWSC and several MRCs plan to submit comment letters regarding the proposed net pen management guidelines. However, Skagit MRC elected not to submit a comment letter. Jay said that he plans to submit a letter on his own (no affiliation with the Skagit MRC) and invited others to do a joint letter. Public comments on the summary of early "[scoping-level](#)" decisions of the [net pen management guidelines](#) can be submitted to Cedar at cedar.bouta@ecy.wa.gov. Comments are due by March 4.
- NWSC Retreat: February 23-24 at Padilla Bay. In addition to strategic planning, several topics of regional interest will also be discussed at the retreat including: defining ecosystem health, Olympia oyster restoration, green crab monitoring, and kelp surveys.
- NWSC Meeting: The next Commission Meeting will be held March 31, 2017 over WebEx from 10:00AM to 12:00PM.

Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) Report: Jay Lind

- MRC Opportunity Fund: Four MRC's project proposals, including Skagit MRC's, were approved for funding by the Foundation's new MRC Opportunity Fund. The list of funded projects was emailed to MRC members.
- MRC "Friend-Raisers": Caroline is trying to schedule "friend-raisers" for five MRCs to increase visibility within their communities. It will be an opportunity for people to meet the MRC members and learn about what the MRC does. Ideally, this event would be open to the public with invitations to local elected officials to help build support around the county. Any money raised would go to the Foundation and tagged for the MRC. The Foundation is seeking input from the MRCs for a location, date, and time, etc. Skagit MRC members were asked to send their ideas to Tracy or Jay.
- Foundation Board Member Update: It is anticipated that Simon Geerlofs will be appointed as the newest Foundation board member when the board meets next week.

Administrative Report: Tracy Alker

- MRC Meeting Location Update: The Fidalgo Bay RV Resort is already booked for two MRC meeting dates, 4/13/17 and 12/14/17. Sarah Tchang offered to reserve a meeting room at the Port of Anacortes for those dates. Samantha Russell will also look into the possibility of reserving a meeting room at Padilla Bay for at least one of those dates.
- 2017-2018 MRC Project Proposals: The March 9th MRC meeting will primarily focus on identifying and prioritizing project proposals for the Oct 1, 2017 – Sept 30, 2018 MRC Grant (our MRC base funding). MRC members were asked to send a list of project ideas, cost estimates, and timelines to Tracy prior to the March 9th MRC meeting.
- NWSI 20th Anniversary: Next year is the 20th anniversary of the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative (NWSI). The MRCs will start brainstorming ideas for a special event to help celebrate the anniversary.

Project Status & Discussion

- **Bowman Bay Nearshore Restoration**: The Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group scheduled another planting with students and stewardship volunteers for March 10th at 9:00a.m. There is currently a team of around five stewardship volunteers who will help with routine plantings and plant maintenance. Winter storms have caused some beach erosion and brought in a lot of woody debris.
- **Washington Park Interpretive Signage**: We received proposals from four different artists for the illustration, design and layout of the tide pool interpretive sign at Washington Park, Anacortes. An artist has been selected to be awarded the contract. After the sign is completed and installed, volunteers will survey beach visitors about to help evaluate the effectiveness of the sign.

- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** The date for Fidalgo Bay Day 2017 has been set for: Saturday, **August 12, 2017** at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort. Planning is underway. Save the Date cards were distributed at the Friends of Skagit Beaches' lecture series, the Storming the Sound event, and the Sound Waters event. Pete hopes to have the State Park's whale skull display again this year as well as the touch tanks. But the Samish canoe rides might not be available. Pete is seeking ideas for a youth craft project that would act as a tribute to Fidalgo Bay and that could be displayed at future events.
- **Salish Sea Stewards:** Registration for the Salish Sea Stewards training ends February 28th. With such a huge interest in the training this year, we decided to increase the class size from 30 to 35 applicants. We now have a record number of 34 people signed up and expect to reach full capacity soon! Samantha is seeking to fill an unpaid internship position to help her handle the larger class size and other tasks. Something new for this year's training is that volunteers will be asked to select one of five project areas to participate in. The idea is to help with team building and increase participation. Classes and presenters are getting finalized. Several MRC members have been asked to be presenters. 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. MRC members are encouraged to attend the first class and potluck to get to know the new volunteers. Morty noted that Kimberly Cauvel will be writing several articles about the Salish Sea Stewards. It will be really great publicity for the program and an important opportunity for the MRC to get recognition as the Salish Sea Stewards program's sponsor.
- **Olympia Oyster Restoration:** Paul worked with the Puget Sound Restoration Fund to draft a proposal for funding to provide two more acres of oyster shell habitat for oyster larval settlement along the west side of Fidalgo Bay near Weaverling Spit in 2018. Paul also helped draft a case study on Olympia oyster restoration in Fidalgo Bay as part of a chapter in a publication of the Nature Conservancy. The Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative and the Skagit MRC are highlighted in the case study. The chapter will also include other case studies from around the US that highlight very different approaches to community outreach and engagement through shellfish restoration.
- **Pinto Abalone Restoration:** Paul and Jay presented the pinto abalone and green crab projects to the San Juan MRC at their monthly meeting last month. The San Juan MRC expressed interest in both projects. Pinto abalone seeding and monitoring will likely take place in the next month or two. Approximately 1000 additional abalone seed will be planted at the six restoration sites in Skagit County. Paul has been working with Kimberly Cauvel from the Skagit Valley Harold to write an article about the pinto abalone work.
- **Kelp Monitoring:** Caroline, Sasha and Lucas applied for federal funding to draft a kelp recovery plan. Partners include: NWSF, NWSC, Puget Sound Restoration Fund, and the Washington State Department of Natural Resources. Lucas and Caroline plan to coordinate a meeting to discuss how to move forward with the kelp monitoring project for the 2017 survey season. They are looking for ideas to streamline kelp monitoring protocols for continuity and efficiency across the MRCs. Other methods for conducting kelp surveys are also being explored such as by power boat, drone, and Remotely Operated Vehicles (ROVs). Kelp will be one of the topics included in the Salish Sea Stewards training this year.
- **Nearshore Monitoring:** Beach seining and forage fish surveys will take place at Bowman Bay this Friday. The beach seining is currently being coordinated by the Samish Indian Nation's Department of Natural Resources.
Forage Fish Index Site Surveys: Forage fish index sites are being coordinated under the leadership of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). All of the data goes to WDFW. Here is a link to WDFW's forage fish index site survey data:
<http://wdfw.maps.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap=19b8f74e2d41470cbd80b1af8dedd6b3&extent=-126.1368,45.6684,-119.6494,49.0781>. All of the MRCs are involved in conducting monthly forage fish index surveys in their own counties. Skagit MRC has three Forage Fish Index sites: Ship Harbor, Similk Bay on the Swinomish Reservation, and Samish Island. There has been evidence of spawning at the Similk Bay site and most likely at Ship Harbor as well. Charlette Thurman and Rachel Price have been a huge help with the forage fish surveys. Pete and Jay sent a letter to Shell Puget Sound Refinery representatives to thank them for allowing Rachel to help with the forage fish surveys. Lucas is currently looking into possibly organizing a special training for forage fish survey project leads in counties that don't currently have strong leads.
- **European Green Crab Monitoring:** 4 out of the 5 green crabs that were discovered in the northwest straits region were found in Padilla Bay. Paul conducted crab molt surveys at various beaches (around 25-30 sites) to look for the best sites for volunteers to survey. So far, no green crab molts have been found. Skagit MRC

recently applied for and was awarded funding from the Northwest Straits Foundation's Opportunity Funds to expand the invasive green crab monitoring effort throughout Skagit County. The funding will be used to pay for Samantha Russell's time for volunteer coordination. Shell Puget Sound Refinery is providing funding for traps and other supplies. Many volunteers have expressed interest in helping with this project. Washington Sea Grant and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) staff will provide green crab monitoring training for the volunteers on February 17th at Padilla Bay. Because there has been such a high interest in green crab monitoring, additional training dates have been scheduled in March. To learn more about the green crab program go to: <https://wsg.washington.edu/community-outreach/environmental-threats/invasive-green-crab-volunteer-monitoring/>.

Miscellaneous Events and Announcements:

- Julie Barber's MRC Alternate: Julie introduced Nicole Casper, her new alternate representing the Swinomish Tribe on the Skagit MRC. Nicole has been working for the Swinomish Tribe's Department of Environmental Protection on restoration projects and water quality monitoring for the last three years.
- Port of Anacortes Updates: The Port of Anacortes recently updated their environmental webpage. The webpage includes a section on Community and Environmental Stewardship with information and links to the Skagit MRC and Northwest Straits Commission websites: <https://www.portofanacortes.com/community-and-environmental-stewardship>. The Port is expanding their outreach effort. Sarah is seeking ideas for environmental educational activities for 8th graders. The Port will be removing two tons of debris off of the pier this week.

The meeting adjourned at 11:14 AM. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, March 9, 2017, at the Skagit County Administration Building in Mount Vernon.



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- **MRC Members Attending:** Tracy Alker, Jay Lind, Kit Rawson, Paul Dinnel, Morty Cohen, Jamey Selleck, Matt Reynolds, Julie Barber, Nathan Biletnikoff, Phyllis Bravinder
- **MRC Members Absent:** Betsy Stevenson, Sarah Tchang, Todd Woodard
- **Others Attending:** Pete Haase (Morty's alternate); Tim Manns, SLT (Kit's alternate); Suzanne Shull, PBNERR; Samantha Russell, CVP; Richard Brocksmith, Skagit Watershed Council; Birdie Davenport, DNR Aquatic Reserves; Erica Bleke, DNR Aquatic Reserves; Lisa Kaufman, NWSF; Bridget Trosin, SeaGrant; Rachel Price, (Nate's Alternate)

Call to Order and Introduction: Jamey Selleck called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. and opened the meeting with introductions.

Approval of Minutes: The February 9 2017, MRC meeting minutes were approved as written.

Public Comments: Julie Barber took a moment to pay tribute to Dr. Eugene Kozloff, a legendary marine biology professor and botanist who recently passed away at the age of 96. He was an amazing teacher, a naturalist and an inspiration to many young scientists. He is probably best known for the field guides he wrote for the Pacific Northwest including "Seashore Life of the Northern Pacific Coast" and "Plants and Animals of the Pacific Northwest". Memorials may be made to the UW Foundation, Friday Harbor Laboratories (Eugene N. Kozloff Endowed Fund), to support undergraduate students.

Washington State Department of Natural Resources Aquatic Reserves Update: Birdie Davenport

- **Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve:** Birdie introduced Erica Bleke, the new staff person for the Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve Program of the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (WDNR). Erica's position is grant funded for one year through the United States Environmental Protection Agency's National Estuary Program to support the Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve Program's Citizen Stewardship Committee. WDNR will look for additional funding to continue to support the Citizen Stewardship Committee program.
 - **Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve Stakeholders Meeting:** A stakeholders meeting will be held to discuss the Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve program and plans for site management and to share different perspectives and actions that should be taken. Birdie will send an invite to the Skagit MRC and all other interested parties and stakeholders.
 - **WSDOT HWY 20 Traffic Circle Project:** The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is now at 30% design for the HWY 20 traffic circle project. According to WDNR's stormwater expert, the 30% design meets all of the necessary requirements to adequately address potential stormwater runoff to Fidalgo Bay. WSDOT will be invited along with their ecology expert to give an update to the MRC when they are at 60% design. MRC members suggested also inviting WDNR's stormwater expert and bringing the Samish tribe's stormwater data to the discussion as well.
 - **Fidalgo Bay Trestle Replacement Project:** WDNR currently has an Interagency Agreement with the City of Anacortes. They met with the City Council to explain the project and the Council was supportive. WDNR has been talking with the Army Corps of Engineers to try to get some design support needed to keep the project moving forward.
- **Lake Kapowsin Aquatic Reserve:** Lake Kapowsin was recently added as WDNR's eighth Aquatic Reserve. It is located in Pierce County and is WDNR's first freshwater aquatic reserve.
- **Cherry Point Aquatic Reserve:** The proposed expansion of the Cherry Point Aquatic Reserve boundary was recently approved to add an additional 45 acres.

- Aquatic Reserves Strategic Plan: Birdie is currently working on a Strategic Plan for the Aquatic Reserves which will include what their focus should be, how to support the programs they already have, and if and how they would add any new aquatic reserves.

Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) Report: Lisa Kaufman

- Shoreline Armor Reduction Program (SHARP): NWSF recently received funding through the Puget Sound Partnership's Near Term Action Agenda updates to continue the Shoreline Armor Reduction Program (SHARP) in partnership with several MRCs including Skagit MRC. Funding for this program will be available from April 2017 to November 2018. The program will involve reaching out to shoreline landowners to provide services in the form of educational workshops, site visits, designs for the removal of shoreline armoring, and permitting assistance. The shoreline landowner outreach material will be updated. Several site visits are planned for Guemes Island this year. Lisa noted that they are still trying to find funding to assist with shoreline armor removal at the at the Similk Bay property. Lisa requested input from the Skagit MRC regarding priority areas to focus on and how we want to improve and implement the program. Below are some things to consider:
 - Does the MRC want to continue doing broad-based workshops like we've done in the past or do we want to focus on specific individual community associations?
 - Because opportunities for shoreline removal might be limited for a lot of the properties in Skagit County, do we want to focus our outreach effort on preventing new armoring from going in?
 - Would the MRC be interested in doing a workshop that focuses on shoreline planting and managing coastal bluffs for those who want to make improvements to their property but don't have any other options? Lisa said there might even be opportunities to apply for a plant grant to assist property owners to make habitat improvements on their property.
 - Lisa would like to form a SHARP planning committee in the next couple of months. The more MRC participation in the process, the stronger the program will be.
- Climate Change Resiliency Project Planning Assistance: The NWSF has some funding for Lisa's time to help MRCs identify and prioritize projects that involve climate change resiliency. Lisa would like to form a subcommittee of MRC members who are interested in participating in the process of identifying opportunities for restoration. It will involve reviewing existing plans and documents and listing and prioritizing projects that we can implement over time and checking off the ones that have already been completed.
- Skagit Restoration Initiative: Lisa reminded the MRC that there is still a balance of around \$30,000 remaining in the SRI funds for restoration projects in Fidalgo and Padilla Bays. The funding requires a 1:1 match. The MRC should start thinking of potential project ideas for that funding. Jay suggested waiting until we find out whether or not funding is needed for the Skagit Land Trust's recent property acquisition on Fidalgo Bay for restoration or monitoring work.

2017 - 2018 MRC Grant Project Proposal Discussion

MRC members discussed the following project ideas for the 2017-2018 MRC grant funding. The project period will be from October 1, 2017 to September 30, 2018. The total grant amount will likely be around \$73,000 again. The projects will need to meet the criteria identified in the NWSC's Request for Proposals that will be sent out later this month. The MRC will need to make a final decision on the project proposals and budget priorities at the April 13 MRC meeting. Final proposals will likely be due the end of May. Morty agreed to present the Salish Sea Stewards project proposal at the April 28th NWSC meeting:

Project	Estimated Budget	Project Lead	Description/Comments
MRC Operations	\$29,000	Tracy Alker	Funding would be used to support staff time, supplies and refreshments for MRC meetings, MRC grant /contract administration, program coordination, MRC display and outreach material updates, and MRC member travel costs for MRC conference, NWSC meetings, training, and workshops. There is some flexibility with this budget.
Fidalgo Bay Day	\$3,500	Pete Haase	Funding would primarily be used for advertising, and supplies for kid's activities, food supplies, and increasing the visibility of the MRC. This budget

Project	Estimated Budget	Project Lead	Description/Comments
			could potentially be reduced if necessary. Fidalgo Bay Day is Skagit MRC's signature annual educational event designed to help increase public awareness of the marine environment and the creatures that live there through the interactive educational displays and other hands-on learning activities such as beach seining and marine touch tanks.
Salish Sea Stewards	\$18,500	Morty Cohen	Funding would be used to continue the Skagit MRC's signature Salish Sea Steward program in partnership with Coastal Volunteer Partnership through the Padilla Bay Foundation. \$18,000 would primarily be used to support the CVP's Volunteer Program Coordinator's time and materials to recruit, train, maintain, and coordinate volunteers to support Skagit MRC and partner projects that protect our local marine resources. Volunteers would receive over 40 hours of training and in return of 50 hours of service. An additional \$500 is needed to purchase a video camera to record the classes. If a GoPro camera is purchased it could also be used for other citizen science projects, such as kelp monitoring.
Kids on the Beach	\$5,000	Pete Haase	Funding would be used to contract with Padilla Bay or with an experienced person to develop and implement a small pilot program to coordinate with one or more school classes and teachers to get some students – probably late grade school or middle school – out on the beach to learn about, and be involved a bit, with some MRC activities. Develop a classroom component and an "on-the-beach" component for a couple of our projects. Forage Fish and Intertidal Monitoring are examples. These would allow for both some learning and also for doing some real science work. The contractor will examine other existing programs that could be used as a model.
Swinomish Interpretive Signs	\$1,000	Julie Barber	Funding would be used to partner with the Swinomish Tribe to update and replace the two interpretive signs at the Swinomish Marine Interpretive Center that were lost in the wind storms last year (one of the signs was on local clams). The MRC logo would be added. Volunteers would be asked to help survey visitors to evaluate the sign effectiveness.
Pinto Abalone Restoration	\$16,400?	Paul Dinnel	Funding would be used to continue building upon existing outplant efforts of juvenile pinto abalone to establish a sustainable population at the restoration sites in Skagit County. Monitor abalone to track survival, growth and movement within the first year. Paul noted that he will have more project details and cost estimates available by the April 13 th MRC meeting.
Bowman Bay Planting	\$3,000?	Jay Lind	Funding would be used to purchase plants needed to replace those plants that didn't survive. Funding would also be used to pay for watering.
Total Budget	\$76,400		

Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Report: *Jamey Selleck and Nate Biletznikoff*

- **NWSC Retreat (February 23-24 at Padilla Bay):** The retreat was a great opportunity to get to know the new NWSC director, Rich Childers. Lucas provided a presentation on forage fish and kelp recovery that all seven MRCs are involved in. They talked about how it will be important to find a way to get the kelp data into the hands of the decision makers and planners. Suzanne Shull said that the Coastal Training Program at Padilla Bay might be a good place to tie all of that together. There was also a great discussion on defining ecosystem health and how it's important for all seven MRCs to address the same benchmarks set under the Northwest Straits Initiative to show the bigger regional picture and collective impact. The primary focus of the retreat was strategic planning. They talked about the path forward for addressing new MRC projects and priorities and opportunities on how we can all work together as a team. On the last day there was an open forum session where they got to add different topics and ideas to take to the Executive Committee for consideration. Some of the topics discussed included: the Vessel Incidental Discharge Act, blue carbon opportunities, and identifying the

tools and infrastructure that might be needed to support more complex science needs such as partnering with research institutes.

- NWSC and NWSF Joint Executive Committee Meeting: Monday, March 13, 2017. This will be the 2nd Joint Executive Committee ever held. This first one was held last year.
- NWSC Monthly Meeting: The next Commission Meeting will be held March 31, 2017 over WebEx from 10:00am to 12:00pm.

Administrative Report: *Tracy Alker*

- April 13th MRC Meeting Location Update: The next MRC meeting will be held at the Port of Anacortes (100 Commercial Avenue).
- MRC Quarterly Progress Reports and Volunteer Hours Due: April 18th!
- 2017 Marine Managers Workshop: The San Juan MRC is sponsoring the 2017 Marine Managers Workshop that will be held Monday, April 3rd at 9:30am to Tuesday, April 4th at 3:00pm at Camp Orkila. The primary focus will be on shipping traffic safety and oil spills. Nate and Phyllis both expressed interest in attending as representatives of the Skagit MRC.

Project Status & Discussion

- **Bowman Bay Nearshore Restoration**: The Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group scheduled another planting with students and stewardship volunteers for this Friday, March 10th at 9:00a.m. MRC members are welcome to help.
- **Tide Pool Interpretive Sign**: Larry Eifert was the artist selected to do the artwork and design for the tide pool interpretive sign at Washington Park. Larry is the same artist who did the signs for Bowman Bay. The draft sign design was shared with the MRC. The sign is designed to help educate beach visitors about the fragile tide pool ecosystem and how certain behaviors can be harmful to the critters that live there. After the sign is finalized, fabricated and installed, volunteers will survey beach visitors to help evaluate the effectiveness of the sign.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day**: The date for Fidalgo Bay Day 2017 has been set for: Saturday, **August 12, 2017** at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort. Planning is underway. Save the Date cards have been distributed. The touch tanks and the State Park's whale skull display will be on display this year. Pete will be in contact with MRC members and volunteers to help with the event.
- **Salish Sea Stewards**: 35 people registered to take the training. We are now at full capacity! 12 people are already on the waiting list for next year's training. MRC members are invited to attend any of the classes. Samantha also invited MRC members and the organizations and agencies they represent to share outreach materials and other resources with the Salish Sea Stewards class. Classes are held Tuesdays from 1:00pm to 5:00pm at Padilla Bay. The first class started March 7th and was followed by a potluck. Nan McKay and Caroline Gibson were originally scheduled to present, but unfortunately had to cancel. Rich Childers, the new Director of the Northwest Straits Commission presented instead. Rich provided an excellent overview of the NWSI and MRCs. Scott Redman from the Puget Sound Partnership also presented and provided an excellent overview of the state of the sound. Several MRC members attended the first class and introduced themselves to the new volunteers. Kimberly Cauvel also attended the first class and will be writing several articles about the Salish Sea Stewards.
- **Olympia Oyster Restoration**: Paul applied for a transfer permit with the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) for putting out more shell strings and shell bags at the Fidalgo Bay sites for monitoring. Brady Blake from WDFW will be working with Paul this summer to look at an area along east March's Point for additional seeding. Olympia oyster seed will be transferred from other areas of Fidalgo Bay so there won't be a need to buy additional oyster seed. Paul will work with the Samish Tribe and volunteers to move shell from the higher intertidal areas to Weaverling Spit to provide better oyster habitat for native oyster settlement in areas where it has been limited so far. The Puget Sound Restoration Fund applied for grant funding to provide additional shell for both the east side of Fidalgo Bay and west side at Weaverling Spit. The Olympia Oyster Restoration Workshop will be held April 21st in Port Townsend. Workshop goals include: increasing coordination across MRCs; standardizing project development information; and developing clear metrics to measure project success.
- **Pinto Abalone Restoration**: The Puget Sound Restoration Fund dive team will be out monitoring and seeding over the next couple of weeks at the six restoration sites in Skagit County. Preliminary monitoring results indicate that the abalone are growing and the adult-sized abalone are starting to move around and away from

the original seed plots, which makes them harder to find. Approximately 3000 additional abalone seed will be planted at the six restoration sites in Skagit County. We are getting three times more abalone seed than what we had contracted for!

- **Kelp Monitoring:** A kelp workshop will be held April 15th in Port Townsend.
- **Nearshore Monitoring:** Beach seining and forage fish surveys will take place at Bowman Bay today, March 9th. Pete noted that the local press will be there to do a story. The beach seining is currently being coordinated by the Samish Indian Nation's Department of Natural Resources.
Forage Fish Index Site Surveys: Forage fish index sites are being coordinated under the leadership of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). All of the data goes to WDFW. Here is a link to WDFW's forage fish index site survey data:
<http://wdfw.maps.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap=19b8f74e2d41470cbd80b1af8dedd6b3&extent=-126.1368,45.6684,-119.6494,49.0781>. All of seven MRCs are involved in conducting monthly forage fish index surveys in their own counties. Skagit MRC has three Forage Fish Index sites: Ship Harbor, Similk Bay on the Swinomish Reservation, and Samish Island. Pete gave special recognition to Charlette Thurman and Rachel Price who have both been a huge help with the forage fish surveys.
- **European Green Crab Monitoring:** Washington Sea Grant and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) staff provided green crab monitoring training for the volunteers in February. An additional training will be held on March 17th at Padilla Bay. There has been a huge interest in this program. Over 100 people will be trained in green crab monitoring. Monitoring will begin in April. Volunteers will be assigned specific priority sites to monitor. MRC Opportunity Funds will be used to pay for Samantha's time to coordinate the volunteers in this effort. Paul thanked Shell Puget Sound Refinery for providing funding for the additional traps and other supplies. To learn more about the green crab program go to: <https://wsg.washington.edu/community-outreach/environmental-threats/invasive-green-crab-volunteer-monitoring/>.

Miscellaneous Events and Announcements:

- **Science and Arts Survey for Youth Education Programs in the Skagit Area:** The Skagit Watershed Council recently sent out a survey to different environmental organizations and agencies that may have programs, events or activities that would benefit from a partnership with schools and education of Skagit area youth (K-12) in their STEAM learning (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math). The survey results will be used to develop an educational resource inventory & guide to help share knowledge and promote different educational programs to school districts, schools, and teachers throughout the Skagit area.

The meeting adjourned at 11:10am. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, April 13, 2017, at the Port of Anacortes (100 Commercial Avenue)



SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the **April 13, 2017** Skagit County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) meeting, held at the Port of Anacortes

Attendees:

- **MRC Members Attending:** Jay Lind, Kit Rawson, Paul Dinnel, Morty Cohen, Jamey Selleck, Matt Reynolds, Julie Barber, Nathan Biletnikoff, Sarah Tchang, Todd Woodard, Betsy Stevenson
- **MRC Members Absent:** Phyllis Bravinder, Tracy Alker
- **Others Attending:** Pete Haase (Morty's alternate); Samantha Russell, CVP; Michael See, SCPW; Maddie Rose, CVP volunteer; Liz Dykstra, WA Dept of Health; Summer Smith, WA Dept of Health Intern; Bridget Trosin, Washington Sea Grant; Jack Middleton, citizen; Gina Johnson, Salish Sea Steward; Claire Cook, PBNERR

Call to Order and Introduction: Jamey Selleck called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. and opened the meeting with introductions.

Approval of Minutes: The March 9 2017, MRC meeting minutes were approved as written.

Public Comments:

- **Shellfish Transfer Permit:** Todd Woodard shared that he recently reviewed a Shellfish Transfer Permit application from Russel Barsh to transfer Olympia oyster spat out of Fidalgo Bay to Lopez Island. In the application it stated "The Skagit County Marine Resources Committee has been notified of our interest in relocating some of these animals and has no objection". The Committee expressed some concern about this statement since the MRC was never informed of this proposal. Paul noted that Russel did discuss the project with him, and that he had no objections, but he was not speaking on behalf of the MRC. The Committee agreed that the MRC should provide the WA Department of Fish and Wildlife with the correct information for their records.
- **Net Pens:** Jay Lind reported that he recently attended a meeting in Olympia about net pens and met Innes Weir who runs an aquaculture business. Jay invited Innes to present at our next MRC meeting on May 11.

Mosquito Monitoring Program, WA Department of Health – Liz Dykstra

The Zika virus arrived in the United States, about a year ago. There are two primary mosquito vectors that transmit the virus: *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus*. The *Aedes aegypti* can also transmit several other tropical fevers like dengue fever and yellow fever. There is currently no evidence of these mosquitoes populating here in Washington State. However, the ability of *Aedes albopictus* to adapt to cooler temperatures is of great concern to the WA Department of Health. Liz Dykstra oversees the mosquito surveillance for the WA Department of Health in coordination with several partners and volunteer organizations. Liz is seeking a few volunteers to help set traps and collect the mosquitoes. Traps should be set in areas where there is a greater potential for finding invasive mosquitoes (e.g. areas with a lot of shipping traffic, ferries, yachts, etc.) The traps should also be set in secure locations that are protected from potential theft. There are several different types of traps and methods that can be used. The Health Department will provide the protocol, traps, containers, and all of the shipping and handling materials. Traps will need to be collected and reset twice a week, starting now through September. If you know anyone who might be interested in helping with the monitoring, contact Liz Dykstra at elizabeth.dykstra@doh.wa.gov.

Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) Report: Jay Lind

- **NWSF Foundation Board Meeting:** The NWSF Board meeting will be taking place next week. Funding is always the main topic of discussion. Tom Cowan is working with State Legislators to get more state funding for our MRCs, similar to what the coastal MRCs are currently getting.
- **Recreational Crabber Outreach:** The NWSC and NWSF will continue working together to support the regional recreational crabber outreach project to reduce lost pots. MRCs are encouraged to participate.

2017 - 2018 MRC Grant Project Proposal Discussion

MRC members discussed and finalized the following MRC project proposals and budget for the 2017-2018 MRC Grant funding. All of the proposals fit the criteria requirements in the NWSC Request for Proposals and each has a clear linkage to the NWSI Strategic Plan and the Puget Sound Partnership's Action Agenda. The Committee voted to approve all of the proposals for the 2017-2018 MRC Grant. MRC Project Leads will meet with the NWSC Staff this Friday, April 14th for a consultation. Morty will present the Salish Sea Stewards project proposal at the April 28th NWSC meeting. Final proposals are due May 19th. The project period will be from October 1, 2017 to September 30, 2018.

Project	Benchmark/s	Estimated Budget	Project Lead	Description/Comments
MRC Operations	NA	\$24,000	Tracy Alker	Funding would be used to support staff time, supplies and refreshments for MRC meetings, MRC grant /contract administration, program coordination, MRC display and outreach material updates, and MRC member travel costs for MRC conference, NWSC meetings, training, and workshops.
Fidalgo Bay Day	Education & Outreach	\$3,500	Pete Haase	2018 will be the 15 th year for Skagit MRC's signature annual Fidalgo Bay Day event. This educational event is designed to help increase public awareness of the marine environment and the creatures that live there through the interactive educational displays and other hands-on learning activities such as beach seining and marine touch tanks. Each year there has been some tweaking and refining of the activities at the event. Suggestions for improvement are always welcome. Funding would primarily be used for advertising, and supplies for kid's activities, food supplies, and increasing the visibility of the MRC.
Salish Sea Stewards	Education & Outreach	\$18,500	Morty Cohen	This proposal will be the 5 th year of the Skagit MRC's signature Salish Sea Steward program, and the 4 th year in partnership with Coastal Volunteer Partnership through the Padilla Bay Foundation. Volunteers would receive over 40 hours of classroom training and 10 hours of additional field training. In return, volunteers would be asked to provide 50 hours of volunteer service. \$18,000 would primarily be used to support the CVP's Volunteer Program Coordinator's time and materials to recruit, train, maintain, and coordinate volunteers to support Skagit MRC and partner projects that protect our local marine resources. The additional \$500 would be used to purchase a video camera to record the classes. If a GoPro camera is purchased it could also be used for other citizen science projects, such as kelp monitoring. One new thing next year will be a nearshore restoration stewardship component. Volunteers will help with planting, plant maintenance, and monitoring at Bowman Bay.
Kids on the Beach	Education & Outreach	\$5,000	Pete Haase	This would be a pilot project for the MRC. Funding would be used to contract with someone to develop a small pilot program to coordinate with one or more school classes and teachers to get some students – probably late grade school or middle school – out on the beach to learn about, and be involved a bit, with some MRC activities. The contractor would examine other existing programs that could be used as a model and develop a classroom component and an “on-the-beach” component for a couple of our projects. Forage fish, intertidal monitoring, and beach seining are examples. These would allow for both some learning and also for doing some real science work.

Project	Benchmark/s	Estimated Budget	Project Lead	Description/Comments
Pinto Abalone Restoration	Marine Life Sound Science	\$20,000	Paul Dinnel	Funding would be used to contract with the Puget Sound Restoration Fund to continue building upon existing outplant efforts of juvenile pinto abalone to increase densities and establish a sustainable population at the restoration sites in Skagit County, and monitor abalone to track survival, growth and movement within the first year. One new component will be an experimental outplant of smaller abalone. If the survival rate is successful, the ability to outplant smaller abalone will save a lot of money and time in the hatchery. Unfortunately, if hatchery spawning is unsuccessful, there will be less abalone to outplant the following year. If that is the case, the budget would be reduced.
Bowman Bay Planting	Marine Habitats	\$2,000	Jay Lind	Funding would be used to contract with the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group to purchase plants needed to replace those plants that didn't survive, organize volunteer planting parties, and to pay for the watering truck.
Total Budget		\$73,000		

Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Report: Jamey Selleck

- NWSC Meeting Highlights - March 31: Jamey noted that the meeting was a very short conference call via WebEx. They discussed the survey results from the NWSC Annual Retreat in February and key priorities for the coming year. Rich has been communicating with Peter Best from the Puget Sound Partnership regarding the Near Term Action project process and timeline. The NWSC also discussed the uncertainties with the budget. Funding is okay for the NWSC and MRCs through September 2018, but is very uncertain beyond that. Rich and Tom Cowan are working to secure annual base funding for the MRCs through the state.
- Next NWSC Monthly Meeting- April 28: The next Commission Meeting will be held April 28, 2017 at Padilla Bay. Representatives from each MRC will present one project proposals for the 2017-2018 MRC Grant. Morty Cohen will be presenting Skagit MRC's Salish Sea Stewards Project Proposal. MRC members are encouraged to attend.

Administrative Report: Michael See

- MRC Grant Reports Due - April 18th: MRC members were asked to send Tracy their quarterly project updates and volunteer hours as soon as possible. For those who already submitted quarterly volunteer hours, thank you!
- MRC "Friend-Raiser": Heidi from the Northwest Straits Foundation found two great places for the MRC "Friend-Raiser" event: H2O (part of the Anacortes Brewery) and the La Conner Brewery. The Committee decided to host the event at H2O the second or third week of May. A Tuesday or Thursday evening would be best.

Project Status & Discussion

- **Bowman Bay Nearshore Restoration**: The next planting party with the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group is scheduled for May 9th at 10:00a.m. MRC members are always welcome to help.
- **Tide Pool Interpretive Sign**: The sign has been finalized and is now ready for fabrication. The sign is designed to help educate beach visitors about the fragile tide pool ecosystem and how certain behaviors can be harmful to the critters that live there. Samantha said that there is a group of Salish Sea Steward volunteers who are working on survey questions to ask beach visitors. The surveys will be used to help evaluate the effectiveness of the sign.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day**: The date for Fidalgo Bay Day 2017 has been set for: Saturday, **August 12, 2017** at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort. Planning is underway. Save the Date cards have been distributed. The touch tanks and the State Park's whale skull display will be on display this year. Pete is working on a few new kids activities this year. Unfortunately, beach seining might not happen this year because the tides will be too far out. Pete will be in contact with MRC members and volunteers to help with the event. Pete is also hoping to find a new MRC Project Lead to charge in 2018.

- **Salish Sea Stewards:** A record number of 35 people are taking the class this year! 12 people are already on the waiting list for next year's training. Morty thanked Samantha for doing an excellent job with the training which is a bit more work with such a large number of people. Samantha said that this year's class is super enthusiastic and ready to help with projects. There is a nice diversity of different age groups, not just retirees. Classes are held Tuesdays from 1:00pm to 5:00pm at Padilla Bay. The last class will be held May 9th followed by a potluck from 4:00pm to 6:00pm. MRC members are encouraged to attend the last class and/or the potluck. Kit suggested presenting the Salish Sea Stewards program to the Board of County Commissioners and inviting the Salish Sea Stewards to share some of their stories.
- **Olympia Oyster Restoration:** Paul will be working with Whatcom MRC to store some of their seed bags in Fidalgo Bay over this upcoming winter. They will then be planted in Mud Bay in the Chuckanut area next year. Paul applied for a transfer permit with the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) for putting out more shell strings and shell bags at the Fidalgo Bay sites for monitoring. Brady Blake from WDFW will be working with Paul this summer to plant additional seed along east March's Point. Paul will work with the Samish Tribe and volunteers to move shell from the higher intertidal areas to Weaverling Spit to provide better oyster habitat for native oyster settlement in areas where it has been limited so far. Paul will also work with volunteers to monitor the oyster seed planted at Cap Sante Marina last year. The Olympia Oyster Restoration Workshop will be held April 21st in Port Townsend.
- **Pinto Abalone Restoration:** The monitoring work for this year is now complete. Some additional seeding will take place at the six restoration sites in Skagit County. Preliminary monitoring results indicate that the abalone are growing and starting to move around and away from the original seed plots. However, there is still no evidence of any newly spawned abalone at the restoration sites.
- **Kelp Monitoring:** A kelp workshop will be held April 15th in Port Townsend. The Foundation secured Holly Garland as a kelp program intern for the 2017 summer season.
- **Nearshore Monitoring:** The monthly monitoring is continuing at Skagit MRC restoration sites.
Forage Fish Index Site Surveys: Monthly surveys continue at Skagit MRC's three Forage Fish Index sites: Ship Harbor, Similk Bay on the Swinomish Reservation, and Samish Island. Charlette Thurman, an intern with the County, has taken the lead on many of Forage Fish Index Site surveys. WA Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) recently held forage fish training at Padilla Bay on April 10th. Erin Dilworth from WDFW is quality checking MRC forage fish samples and will send out a summary spreadsheet of quality assurance test results on a monthly basis to MRCs.
- **European Green Crab Monitoring:** Washington Sea Grant is overseeing the European Green Crab monitoring effort. MRC Opportunity Funds are being used to pay for Samantha's time to provide local volunteer coordination in Skagit County. Shell Puget Sound Refinery provided funding for the additional traps and other supplies. Monitoring in Skagit County starts tomorrow. There are several monitoring sites in Skagit County including Fidalgo Bay, Padilla Bay, Swinomish Channel, and Kiket Island. To learn more about the green crab program go to: <https://wsg.washington.edu/community-outreach/environmental-threats/invasive-green-crab-volunteer-monitoring/>.

Miscellaneous Events and Announcements:

- **Anacortes Waterfront Festival – June 3 and 4:** Several organizations are getting together to share a table. Jay and Kit volunteered to help with the MRC display and crabber outreach for a few hours.
- **Shore-Side Beach Cleanup-May 13th:** The MRC is partnering with RE-Sources, The Coastal Volunteer Partnership, and the Swinomish Tribe to co-sponsor a shore-side beach cleanup along the Swinomish Channel on May 13th.

The meeting adjourned at 11:02 am. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, May 11, 2017, at the Skagit County Administration Building (1800 Continental Place), Mount Vernon



ISKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the **May 11, 2017** Skagit County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) meeting, held at the Skagit County Administration Building in Mount Vernon

Attendees:

- **MRC Members Attending:** Jay Lind, Paul Dinnel, Morty Cohen, Matt Reynolds, Julie Barber, Nathan Biletnikoff, Sarah Tchang, Todd Woodard, Betsy Stevenson, Tracy Alker, Phyllis Bravinder
- **MRC Members Absent:** Jamey Selleck, Kit Rawson
- **Others Attending:** Pete Haase (Morty's alternate); Samantha Russell, CVP; Jude Apple, PBNERR; Lucas Hart, NWSC; Tom Flanagan, Salish Sea Stewards; Innes Weir, Cooke Aquaculture; Bob Weathers, Salish Sea Stewards; Gina Johnson, Salish Sea Stewards; Shane Crawford, CVP Intern/Salish Sea Stewards; Suzanne Shull, PBNERR

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

Approval of Minutes: The April 13, 2017, MRC meeting minutes were approved as written.

Public Comments: No comments.

Overview of Marine Aquaculture Operations: Innes Weir, General Manager- Cooke Aquaculture

Cooke Aquaculture is the only marine salmon farming business in the United States. They prefer to farm Atlantic salmon compared to chinook or sockeye salmon because they are easier and less expensive to grow in captivity for human consumption. Cooke's Atlantic salmon farming operations are marine-based and not land based because it is not currently economically feasible to build and operate a land-based salmon farming facility. There are two Atlantic salmon farming operations located in Skagit County including Cypress Island and Hope Island and there are no plans for expansion in Washington State. Marine aquaculture businesses are regulated under stringent federal and state laws and regulations that protect the environment. They are required to continually monitor the aquaculture site while it is in operation. Some of the extra steps they take to ensure the health of the farmed fish and the surrounding marine environment include the following:

- **Fish feed and nutrient management:** Fish feed has been greatly improved over the years. They now primarily make fish feed out of fish parts from fish processed for human consumption, so it reduces waste and reduces pressure on wild fish stocks. Fish farmers also take extreme precautions to avoid over-feeding by using automated feeders and underwater cameras to monitor consumption, fish behavior, and the benthic environment. In order to reduce nutrient buildup, salmon farms are located in areas with good flushing, good depth, and a seafloor made of sand, cobble and small rocks. In order to show that their aquaculture operations produce "no net enrichment", they test the bottom sediments on a regular basis. They also monitor water quality and algae.
- **Maintaining fish health:** Appropriate stocking density is based on best practice welfare standards. They have routine monitoring of fish condition and behavior. Only disease free eggs, fry and smolts are used. Fish regularly get checked for diseases and parasites. Farmed fish are all vaccinated against all known pathogens. Fish pathogens infecting Atlantic salmon are endemic to Washington and appear to come from native fish stocks. There is no evidence which indicates disease transfers from farmed Atlantic salmon to wild salmon. Antibiotics are rarely used and are strictly regulated under the supervision of a veterinarian. Fish farmers have been able to greatly decrease the incidence of sea lice by reducing fish stocking densities, rotating net pens, and allowing sites to lie fallow between harvests. Fortunately, sea lice do not appear to be a problem in Washington State. However, Todd Woodard noted that his crew has observed sea lice during their research, and the number of sea lice seems to increase the closer they got to the net pens in Secret Harbor. He also expressed concern over some of the marine debris that accumulates as a result of the aquaculture operations at Cypress Island. Innes said that he is aware of the debris issue and they are working on ways to resolve the problem.
- **Protection against escapes of farmed salmon:** Back in the 1990s, there were several catastrophic events resulting in the escape of close to 600,000 Atlantic salmon in Washington State waters. Since then, the

advances in technology and improved containment system designs and best management practices, including the use of underwater cameras and divers to monitor fish behavior and health, and inspect cages, have significantly reduced escapements of farmed salmon. Divers monitor the salmon and inspect the containment systems 3 to 6 days a week. They also receive audits on a regular basis. Predator nets are used to prevent interaction with marine birds and mammals. Although the risk of escaped Atlantic salmon surviving in Washington State waters and hybridizing with native salmonids is low, scientists are looking at the use of sterile hatchery fish to minimize the likelihood that any escapes will reproduce in the wild.

San Juan Marine Managers Workshop Report: *Phyllis Bravinder*

The San Juan MRC's Marine Managers Workshop was held April 3-4 at Camp Orkila, Orcas Island. Over 70 participants contributed to discussions and outcomes. The keynote speaker was Dave Anderson, author of [Spill: Oil and Orcas in the Salish Sea](#). Dr. Joe Gaydos, Director of the SeaDoc Society, gave a presentation on the ecosystem baseline. Workshop participants explored the potential environmental and socioeconomic impacts of a hypothetical large oil spill on nearby communities. It is anticipated that the report, recommendations and MRC actions will soon follow.

Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Report: *Lucas Hart*

- **NWSC Meeting Highlights – April 28:** Elections were held for board officers. Nan McKay will continue to serve another one-year term as Chair and Jamey Selleck will continue to serve one more year as Vice-Chair. Jamey will likely move into the Chair position next year. Each MRC presented a project proposal for the upcoming grant year. Morty presented the Salish Sea Stewards. The 2017 MRC Conference will be held November 3-4 in Bellingham. Save the Date cards were distributed to the MRC. MRC members are invited to send conference topic ideas to Nicole Jordan at Jordan@nwstraits.org.
- **Puget Sound Day on the Hill:** Last week, representatives from the NWSC and NWS Foundation recently met with other regional leaders in Washington DC for Puget Sound Day on the Hill.
- **Next NWSC Monthly Meeting- May 26:** The next NWSC meeting will be a WebEx Conference Call held May 26 from 10:00am to 12:00pm.

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

- **NWSF Foundation Board Meeting:** The NWSF Board meeting will be taking place next week. Funding is always the main topic of discussion. Tom Cowan is working with State Legislators to get more state funding for our MRCs, similar to what the coastal MRCs are currently getting.
- **Skagit MRC Celebration – May 24:** Mark your calendars! The date for the Skagit MRC "Friend-Raiser" celebration has been set for Wednesday May 24th, from 5:00pm to 8:00pm at H2O (part of the Anacortes Brewery and Rockfish Grill) in Anacortes. Heidi from the Northwest Straits Foundation is working on the flyer and will send out an Evite to everyone. You are welcome to invite anyone you think might be interested in coming. Jay generously offered to provide appetizers.

MRC Membership Application: *Jude Apple*

Jude Apple applied to become a member of the Skagit MRC. Jude is a marine ecologist and research coordinator at Padilla Bay NERR. The Committee voted in favor of making the recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to appoint Jude Apple to the Skagit MRC. There were no objections. Sarah noted that we needed just one more MRC member to actually have a quorum. However, three MRC members who could not attend the meeting voted via proxy, in favor of appointing Jude to the MRC, so the vote stands. A resolution amendment appointing Jude Apple to the Skagit MRC will need to be signed by the Board of County Commissioners to make it official.

Administrative Report: *Tracy Alker*

- **2017 - 2018 MRC Grant Budget Revision:** It was brought to the attention of the MRC that the budget for the Salish Sea Stewards project proposal is in need of additional funding in order to cover the expenses required to run the program and to retain a full-time Volunteer Program Coordinator. In order to do that, funding will need to be moved from one of the other project proposals in the 2017-2018 MRC Grant Application. The Committee decided that it was very important to find a way to keep the Salish Sea Stewards program fully funded, so after a little persuading, Paul Dinnel said that he could reduce the Pinto Abalone Restoration budget by \$1,500 and

Pete Haase said that he could reduce the Fidalgo Bay Day budget by \$500. The consensus of the MRC was to revise the 2017-2018 MRC Grant Budget as follows:

<u>Project Proposal</u>	<u>Old Budget</u>	<u>Revised Budget</u>
Task 1: MRC Operations	\$24,000.00	\$24,000.00
Task 2: Fidalgo Bay Day	\$3,500.00	\$3,000.00
Task 3: Salish Sea Stewards	\$18,500.00	\$20,500.00
Task 4: Kids on the Beach	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00
Task 5: Pinto Abalone Restoration	\$20,000.00	\$18,500.00
Task 6: Bowman Bay Restoration	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
Total Budget:	\$73,000.00	\$73,000.00

*Note: Tracy contacted the other MRC members who weren't at the meeting to make sure they didn't have any objections to the revised budget. There were no objections, so the revised budget was adopted.

- **2017-2018 MRC Grant Application- Due May 19th:** The MRC grant application is due Friday, May 19th. Internal review by NWSC staff to ensure that proposals meet the criteria will occur June-July. Additional review of projects may be done by the Science Advisory Committee and other NWSC technical advisors. They may request clarification or additional information from the MRC.

Project Status & Discussion

- **Bowman Bay Nearshore Restoration:** A planting party hosted by the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group was held May 9th. Nearshore monitoring continues on a monthly basis.
- **Tide Pool Interpretive Sign:** The sign design has been finalized and is in the process of fabrication.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** The date has been set for: Saturday, August 12, 2017 at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort. Save the Date cards have been widely distributed. Planning continues. Initial contact has been made with the displayers. Several new Salish Sea Stewards have already signed up to help. One new activity planned this year is the creation of marine themed luminaires, followed by a lighted parade.
- **Salish Sea Stewards:** A record number of 34 people completed the Salish Sea Stewards training this year! This incredible new group of volunteers has already given back over 434 hours of volunteer services in the last ten weeks! The final class and graduation celebration took place on May 9th including the following highlights: Samantha Russell presented an overview of the topics that they covered throughout the training, as well as some of the takeaways, resources, and volunteer opportunities; Pete Haase gave a presentation on the history of Earth Day and the EPA; Nan McKay provided an inspiring commencement speech; and Morty Cohen and Terry Stevens provided a warm "Thank You" and words of encouragement. Graduates were each given a graduation certificate, a plant from the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group, and a Salish Sea Stewards/Skagit Marine Resources Committee t-shirt to help identify the volunteers and increase the visibility of the program. Volunteers had the opportunity to browse through the different displays, games, and activities that are in need of volunteers to host at special events. Several different upcoming events, activities, and volunteer opportunities were posted around the room along with sign-up sheets. An article about the Salish Sea Stewards was recently posted on a new blog called "[Puget Sound Innovation Stories](#)" and in the [Skagit Valley Herald](#).
- **Olympia Oyster Restoration:** Paul, with the help of several volunteers, relocated oyster shell from Crandall Spit and redistributed it on the west side of Fidalgo Bay at Weaverling Spit. Paul also collected a few cultch bags for monitoring and is gearing up to do more sampling in Fidalgo Bay during the next tide cycle. Data collected so far indicates a moderate oyster settlement from last year. Jack Middleton, one of the volunteers at the Coastal Volunteer Partnership, discovered a few hundred to perhaps a few thousand Olympia oysters in the high channels at the southern end of Fidalgo Bay near Sharp's Corner.
- **Pinto Abalone Restoration:** The field work is now complete. The final report will be completed by September 30th.



Salish Sea Stewards, Class of 2017!



Photo Credit: Paul Dinnel

- **Kelp Monitoring:** Three new Salish Sea Stewards and three volunteers from the Hole in the Wall Kayak Club in Anacortes expressed interest in helping with the kelp surveys in Skagit County this year (last year we only had two volunteers). The focus this year will be on establishing an inventory of the kelp beds including the location, size, and accessibility. Volunteers will be recruited to take photos of the kelp beds that will later be incorporated into a map. Suzanne Shull will help us develop a smart phone app that can be used for crowdsourcing input from volunteers. Once the inventory is complete, we will do a “needs assessment” to prioritize the kelp beds that need to be surveyed on a regular basis.
- **Forage Fish Index Site Surveys:** Monthly surveys continue at Skagit MRC’s three Forage Fish Index sites: Ship Harbor, Similk Bay on the Swinomish Reservation, and Samish Island. Pete thanked Charlette Thurman, an intern with the County, and Rachel Price from Shell Refinery, who continue to take the lead on most of the Forage Fish Index Site surveys.
- **European Green Crab Monitoring:** Skagit MRC partnered with the Washington Sea Grant to expand European Green Crab monitoring throughout Skagit County. MRC Opportunity Funds are being used for volunteer coordination. Shell Puget Sound Refinery provided funding for the additional traps and other supplies. Monitoring in Skagit County started the second week of April. The Samish Tribe is also putting out traps. So far two green crabs have been discovered in Padilla Bay. There was a recent article in the Skagit Valley Herald about the green crab monitoring efforts [“Search resumes for invasive green crabs in area waters”](#).

Miscellaneous Events and Announcements:

- **Shore-Side Beach Cleanup- May 13:** The MRC is partnering with RE-Sources, The Coastal Volunteer Partnership, and the Swinomish Tribe to co-sponsor a shore-side beach cleanup along the Swinomish Channel on May 13th.
- **Partner Review Workshop, Shoreline Armor Implementation Strategy- May 16th:** The Implementation Strategy is a road map to accelerate progress towards meeting the [Shoreline Armoring](#) Puget Sound Vital Sign target. The workshop will be held Tuesday, May 16th from 10:00am to 3:00pm at the Edmonds Center for the Arts, 410-4th Ave North, Edmonds. Please RSVP: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/shoreline-armoring-implementation-strategy-partner-workshop-tickets-34045563196>.
- **Extreme Events and Climate Change in the Skagit River Basin, A Stakeholder Engagement Workshop- May 18th:** Stakeholders, including MRC members, are invited to participate in a workshop on *Extreme Events and Climate Change in the Skagit River Basin*. The workshop will be held **Thursday May 18th** at the Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve in Bayview, WA. The workshop will run from 9am - 3pm and lunch will be provided. The workshop is free, but registration is required. Please go to the following link to register: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/38Y5P39>.
- **Swinomish Blessing of the Fleet- May 18:** The Swinomish Indian Tribal Community’s Blessing of the Fleet and First Salmon Ceremony will be held May 18th at noon at the Youth Center, 17275 Reservation Road.

The meeting adjourned at 11:02 am. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, June 8, 2017, at the Fidalgo Bay Resort in Anacortes (4701 Fidalgo Bay Rd, Anacortes)



SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

DRAFT Minutes of the **June 08, 2017** Skagit County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) meeting, held at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort in Anacortes

Attendees:

- **MRC Members Attending:** Jay Lind, Paul Dinnel, Morty Cohen, Matt Reynolds, Julie Barber, Nathan Biletnikoff, Sarah Tchang, Todd Woodard, Tracy Alker, Phyllis Bravinder, Kit Rawson, Jude Apple, PBNERR
- **MRC Members Absent:** Jamey Selleck, Betsy Stevenson
- **Others Attending:** Pete Haase (Morty's alternate); Samantha Russell, CVP; Jason Morgan, NWSF; Gina Johnson, Salish Sea Steward; Suzanne Shull, PBNERR; Rich Childers, NWSC; Hannah Moon, Ace Hardware; Jennifer Herron, SSS Volunteer/Whale Museum

Call to Order and Introduction: Sarah Tchang called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. and opened the meeting with introductions.

Approval of Minutes: The May 11, 2017, MRC meeting minutes were revised to reflect that the 2017-2018 MRC grant budget revisions were adopted afterwards.

Public Comments:

- **MRC Celebration at H2O:** Sarah Tchang thanked everyone who was able to attend the Skagit MRC Celebration at H2O in Anacortes last month. It was a lot fun! We had a really nice turnout and it was a great opportunity for the MRC members to get to know each other and to meet some of the new volunteers. A big "Thank You" goes out to Jay Lind for providing the appetizers, Heidi Lehman for reserving the facility, and H2O for accommodating our group.
- **May 13th Shore-Side Beach Cleanup:** Pete Haase thanked the Skagit MRC for partnering with the Swinomish Tribe, Coastal Volunteer Partnership, and RE-Sources to co-sponsor a shore-side cleanup at the Swinomish Reservation on Saturday, May 13. Around 30 volunteers participated including several new Salish Sea Stewards. They removed nearly 900lbs of trash!

Ace Hardware, Anacortes "Orca Friendly" Campaign: Hannah Moon, Anacortes Ace Hardware

As part of a pilot project, Randy Burgess, the owner of the Ace Hardware stores in Anacortes and Friday Harbor, recently partnered with the Pacific Whale Watch Association to help build awareness about the "greener" products that are available in their stores as an alternative to the other more toxic products that could harm marine life. They came up with the "Orca Friendly" label because the endangered southern resident orcas are such an icon of the Pacific Northwest and the image seems to resonate with most people. The labels are placed on the shelves next to the products to help folks identify them more easily. Although they do not currently have a scientific process in place for labeling products as "Orca-Friendly", the product ingredients must meet certain criteria including: they must be naturally derived, non-toxic, biodegradable, and present no measurable harm to marine life and waterways. How the product is manufactured and packaged is also taken into consideration. Hanna brought a few "Orca Friendly" labeled products from her store to share as an example. So far, the Anacortes store has about 100 products that they deemed to be "Orca-Friendly". The "Orca Friendly" labels have been a huge hit with the customers and a great way to get the conversation started about how some of the products we use on land can impact our waterways and the marine life that live there. The Ace Hardware stores are each privately owned, so the "Orca Friendly" label has not caught on in the other stores yet, but they are hoping it will. While MRC members agreed that promoting healthy waterways with environmentally friendly products is a great idea, there was some concern about the lack of science being used for marketing something as "orca friendly". Jude suggested Ace use a more quality control, scientific authority or other validated criteria for determining what exactly qualifies as orca friendly.



Recreational Crabber Outreach Campaign: Jason Morgan- Northwest Straits Foundation

- **Derelict Crab Pots:** Approximately 12,000 recreational crab pots are lost in Puget Sound each year, primarily due to user error. These lost crab pots continue to fish for up to two years and kill around 180,000 harvestable crabs. The Northwest Straits Foundation and the Northwest Straits Commission formed a derelict crab pot advisory committee representing different stakeholder groups to develop a three year plan to reduce the number of derelict crab pots in Puget Sound. The "[Puget Sound Lost Crab Pot Prevention Plan](#)" is available on the Northwest Straits Foundation's

website. The Northwest Straits Foundation removes around 1,000 derelict crab pots each year. Next June, the Foundation plans to do a large removal project of derelict crab pots in the Guemes Channel.

- **Crab Pot Modification:** A few years ago the Northwest Straits Foundation conducted a study to document the crab escapement rates of different crab pot designs. Results of the study indicated that the way many of the pots were designed, the escape mechanism failed despite appropriate use of biodegradable escape cord. The escape rings are typically welded onto the crab pots, and they discovered that just by modifying the escape rings with biodegradable cord, 100% of the crabs were able to escape. The Foundation plans to start working with crab pot manufacturers to start making crab pots with the modified escape ring design.
- **Crabber Outreach:** 30 - 35% of recreational crabbing licenses sold each year are to new crabbers who have never had a license before, so continued outreach is really important. The Foundation contracted with a social marketing company to help update their outreach campaign. The new outreach materials are a lot more colorful with positive messaging and a lot less doom and gloom (which seemed to turn people off). On the back of the rack cards there is a link to a short survey for a chance to win a drawing for new crabbing gear. The MRCs can help with outreach by distributing rack cards and crab gauges to retailers, kiosks, marinas, and/or directly to the crabbers at the boat launches on opening day of crabbing season. Skagit MRC members discussed distributing outreach materials to the Port of Anacortes, Samish Indian Nation, and Ace Hardware in Anacortes. Samantha will send out a request for volunteers to help with outreach at public boat launches on the first day of crabbing season. In addition, the Foundation plans to re-release the [crabber outreach videos](#) they created in another Facebook campaign this year (last year they reached over 300,000 people!).
- **Crabbing Regulations:** Crabbing regulations can be found on the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's website: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/shellfish/crab/>.



Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Report: *Sarah Tchang*

- **Puget Sound Day on the Hill:** Rich, Nan, Jerry, Caroline and Ginny attended Puget Sound Day on the Hill in Washington DC. They met with Senator Patty Murray who reaffirmed her support of the Northwest Straits Initiative.
- **MRC Funding:** The External Relations Committee is working on securing biennial funding for MRCs in the amount of \$450,000 from the state legislature.
- **2016 Annual Report:** The Northwest Straits Initiative [2016 Annual Report](#) is now available on the NWSC website.
- **2017 Annual MRC Conference:** The annual MRC conference is scheduled for November 3-4, 2017 in Bellingham.
- **Science Advisory Committee Update:** Hugh Shipman, Coastal Geologist with the Washington Department of Ecology joined the NWSC Science Advisory Committee. Ron Thom and Tom Mumford are developing a two-page document on ecosystem health/condition which will be presented at the June Commission meeting.
- **Puget Sound Partnership Update:** The Partnership published a blog and hard copy book which includes success stories on restoration throughout Puget Sound.
- **Next NWSC Monthly Meeting- June 30:** The next NWSC meeting will be held June 30 at the Snohomish County Campus Building from 10:00am to 3:00pm.

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

- **Ginny Broadhurst Update:** Western Washington University recently hired Ginny Broadhurst to be the new director of its [Salish Sea Studies Institute](#). For more information about the Salish Sea Studies Institute: <https://westerntoday.wvu.edu/features/western-establishes-new-salish-sea-studies-institute>.
- **NWSF Foundation Board Meeting:** The NWSF Board meeting will be taking place next week. The topics to be discussed include the budget and elections of officers.

Administrative Report: *Tracy Aker*

*Due to the full meeting agenda, the administrative report was emailed to MRC members.

- 2017 – 2018 MRC Grant Proposal Revisions: We recently received a few minor comments/questions from the NW Straits Commission regarding our 2017-2018 MRC grant proposals. Tracy is currently working with the project leads to address the comments and make the necessary revisions. The revisions are due this Friday.
- Bay View Dine and Discover: The Bay View Dine and Discover event is happening this Friday from 4-8pm at Bay View State Park. Tracy will be hosting the Skagit MRC's storm drain golf game at the event and handing out Fidalgo Bay Day event cards.

Project Status & Discussion

- Bowman Bay Nearshore Restoration: A planting party hosted by the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group was held May 9th. The next one is scheduled for June 13th. Nearshore monitoring continues to occur on a monthly basis.
- Tide Pool Interpretive Sign: The sign is still in the process of fabrication. Samantha Russell plans to recruit a few beach naturalists to help guide a group of around 60, 7th grade students in tide pool etiquette and beach exploration at Washington Park on June 14th.
- Fidalgo Bay Day: The date has been set for: Saturday, August 12, 2017 at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort. The layout will be a little different this year because some of the rooms, including the kitchen and game room, have been rearranged. Save the Date cards have been widely distributed. Planning continues. Initial contact has been made with the displays. Pete will follow-up and confirm the displays soon. Several new Salish Sea Stewards have already signed up to help. A new food service lead is needed for making arrangements for chowder samples with participating restaurants and volunteers to help serving chowders. The initial contact with the restaurants has already been made but someone will need to follow-up. Please let Pete know if you would be interested in being the food service lead. Tracy will also need help with the MRC display and activities as well.
- Salish Sea Stewards: 34 volunteers completed the training that ended in May. 15 people have already requested applications for next year's training. Samantha will start evaluating the results of surveys completed by the newly graduated Salish Sea Stewards soon. Volunteer hours reported in Volgistics will be tallied at the end of each quarter and included in the MRC quarterly progress reports. Two new Salish Sea Stewards, Gina Johnson and Rachel Best, recently joined the Salish Sea Stewards planning subcommittee. Their input will be valuable in planning next year's training and in making improvements to the program. Todd noted that one of the new Salish Sea Stewards will be helping the Samish with their kelp surveys this summer. Several Salish Sea Stewards and MRC members will also be volunteering at the Dine & Discover event at Bay View State Park this Friday.
- Olympia Oyster Restoration: Paul, with the help of several volunteers, completed the monitoring at the Cap Sante Marina and Sea Farers Park area. The oysters that were planted last year were two small to spawn, but are expected to spawn this year. They also collected most of the monitoring bags from 20 locations around Fidalgo Bay to look for new oyster settlement. Data collected so far indicates a moderate oyster spawn from last year. Two new shell plots were established at Weaverling Spit. Paul helped Whatcom County MRC distribute close to 40 bags of oyster seed at the Fidalgo Bay trestle to over-winter. The seed bags will be transplanted in Chuckanut Bay next summer. Paul and the other volunteers are gearing up to do some more monitoring during the next low tide cycle.
- Pinto Abalone Restoration: The field work is now complete. The final report will be completed by September 30th.
- Kelp Monitoring: The Northwest Straits Initiative created a short [video](#) explaining the establishment and importance of the Northwest Straits Initiative's kelp surveys. The Northwest Straits Foundation has funding to hire an intern to develop a condition index for kelp bed health. In order to get a good inventory of bull kelp beds in Skagit County, volunteers will be asked to participate in a two week long "Northwest Straits Bull Kelp Flash Survey". To make it easier for the volunteers to record and share the data they collect, Suzanne Shull created an [online survey application](#) that can be downloaded to a smart phone or accessed online by a computer. Survey data collected will include: date, time, kelp bed location, estimated kelp bed size, animal presence, and photos. Photos will be tagged to a particular location on a map. Samantha Russell will send out an announcement through "The Wave" to try to recruit volunteers to participate in the two week long "Northwest Straits Bull Kelp Flash Survey". This will be a good test to find out whether or not this type of crowdsourcing program works. If it is successful, it could be transferred to other MRCs.
- Forage Fish Index Site Surveys: Monthly surveys continue at Skagit MRC's three Forage Fish Index sites: Ship Harbor, Similk Bay on the Swinomish Reservation, and Samish Island. Surf smelt eggs have been observed at the Similk Bay site, but no smelt eggs have been found at Ship Harbor or Samish Island. Spawning in Fidalgo Bay has started to pick up.
- European Green Crab Monitoring: Skagit MRC partnered with the Washington Sea Grant to expand European Green Crab monitoring throughout Skagit County. MRC Opportunity Funds are being used for volunteer coordination. Shell Puget Sound Refinery provided funding for the additional traps and other supplies. Monitoring in Skagit County started the second week of April. Teams of volunteers are each assigned specific locations to monitor. As part of the

green crab outreach effort, Samantha Russell, with the help of a few volunteers, will help teach approximately 25 Cub Scouts how to survey and correctly identify various crabs at Bay View State Park on June 17th 11:00am-1:00pm Bay View State Park.

- **Weaverling Spit Beach Nourishment Restoration:** This project is funded in part by the Skagit MRC's Skagit Restoration Initiative funds (SRI). SRI funds are part of a Natural Resources Damages Settlement payment from Kimberly-Clark for the former Scott Paper Mill site in Anacortes and are administered by the Northwest Straits Foundation for restoration projects in Fidalgo Bay and Padilla Bay. It was determined that SRI funds would require a 1:1 match. The Weaverling Spit Restoration project was originally scheduled to be completed last fall, but had to be delayed for another year due to permitting issues. Unfortunately, the project bids came in much higher than the original cost estimates and much higher than the current available funding for this project. Todd will be meeting with the Samish Indian Nation's tribal council in two weeks to ask for an approximately \$70,000 contribution. If the funding gets approved, the project will move forward as planned and construction will be completed this fall. However, if it doesn't get approved, the project would get delayed again and they will lose DNR and federal matching funds and would have to go through the permitting process all over again.

Miscellaneous Events and Announcements:

- **Dine and Discover- June 9 (4pm to 8pm at Bay View State Park):** Join the Coastal Volunteer Partnership and the Skagit County Clean Water program for a free evening of local food, fun games, raffle prizes, and live music by the Prozac Mountain Boys.
- **Oil Spill Response: Dispersants Workshop- June 13 (10:15am-4:30pm at Friday Harbor):** The purpose of the workshop is to convene a group of stakeholders to share information about dispersant science and decision-making and elicit feedback. RSVP required www.sanjuandem.netJune13. Skagit MRC members Phyllis and Nate are planning to attend.
- **Puget Sound Partnership Leadership Council Meeting- June 21 (8am – 1pm at Padilla Bay):** The Leadership Council meets about four times a year to conduct business. Meetings are open to the public. They don't meet at Padilla very often, so it would be a great opportunity for Skagit MRC members to attend.
- **Taste of Padilla Bay – with a Hint of Maine- Aug 19:** The Padilla Bay Foundation will hold its annual auction dinner fundraiser on Saturday, August 19th at the Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve. This year's fundraiser will support a Touch Pool Experience in Padilla Bay's aquarium room as well as the Coastal Volunteer Partnership Program. The event will feature a sumptuous buffet and both a silent and live auction with live music by Jumbled Pie.

The meeting adjourned at 11:09 a.m. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, July 13, 2017, at the Skagit County Administration Building in Mount Vernon (1800 Continental Place)



SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the **July 13, 2017** Skagit County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) meeting, held at the Skagit County Administration Building in Mount Vernon.

Attendees:

- **MRC Members Attending:** Jay Lind, Paul Dinnel, Morty Cohen, Julie Barber, Nathan Biletznikoff, Sarah Tchang, Todd Woodard, Tracy Alker, Phyllis Bravinder, Kit Rawson, Jude Apple, Jamey Selleck, Betsy Stevenson
- **MRC Members Absent:** Matt Reynolds
- **Others Attending:** Pete Haase (Morty's alternate); Gina Johnson, Salish Sea Steward; Richard Brocksmith, Skagit Watershed Council; Clair Cook, PBNERR; Charlette Thurman, SCPW; Katylani Siplin, SFEG; Marta Green, San Juan County LIO

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

Approval of Minutes: The June 8, 2017, MRC meeting minutes were revised to include the discussion about the lack of science behind the "Orca Friendly" labeling.

Public Comments:

- **Oil Spill Response: Dispersants Workshop:** MRC members Phyllis Bravinder and Nate Biletznikoff attended the workshop on June 13th at Friday Harbor, San Juan Island and provided a brief summary. The purpose of the workshop was to bring together different stakeholders to share information and elicit feedback about oil spill response, dispersant science and decision making. Although there is a lot of concern about the use of dispersants and their environmental impacts, federal and state agencies indicated that they would prefer to leave the option of using dispersants in the toolbox, but only as a last resort. Will King, a UW Friday Harbor Labs grad student is working on a dispersant literature review for San Juan County marine waters. As a follow-up to the workshop, Will is scheduled to present his findings at the San Juan County MRC meeting on August 2nd at 8:30am in the Council Chambers at Friday Harbor. MRC members suggested inviting Will to our next MRC meeting to present his findings, or try to get a recording of Will's presentation.
- **Killer Whale Research and Conservation Program 2017 Request for Proposals:** Nate announced that Shell Oil Company is contributing \$250,000 to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Killer Whale Research and Conservation Program this year and has committed funding for this program for three years. The other funding partners include Sea World Entertainment Inc. and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The National Wildlife Foundation Killer Whale Research and Conservation Program recently sent out a [Request for Proposals](#) which are due July 14, 2017. Grants won't be awarded until December. They anticipate awarding up to \$900,000 in funding for grants this year. The majority of awards under this program will fall in the range of \$50,000 to \$150,000. A minimum of a 1:1 match of cash and/or in-kind services is required. Projects may extend from one to three years. The priorities will be the proposals that implement the three strategies that aid in the recovery of the Southern Resident killer whale population of the Salish Sea including: increase prey availability, improve habitat quality, and strengthen management through research. The Northwest Straits Foundation indicated that they plan to submit several proposals.

Orca Protection Outreach Campaign: Marta Green, San Juan County Local Integrated Organization (LIO) Coordinator

- Southern resident orcas are threatened by a trifecta of issues including: a lack of prey (Chinook salmon), noise and disturbance from vessels, and pollution. In an effort to help protect southern resident orcas, a group of environmental organizations filed a petition with NOAA to establish a federal [Whale Protection Zone \(WPZ\)](#) along the west coast of San Juan Island. There is currently a [Voluntary Whale Protection Zone](#) in place to try to keep boats a quarter mile away from the shoreline when orcas are present, but the program is not well known or observed.
- The San Juan County Council decided not to support the petition to establish a federally mandated WPZ because of concerns about the potential economic impacts on the whale watching companies, effects on recreational anglers, potential conflicts with tribal treaty rights, and the difficulty of enforcement. Instead, San Juan County wants to try to find an alternative to the WPZ by taking local action in orca conservation. The San Juan County LIO currently has enough funding for one year to accomplish some of their goals.

- The first step they are taking is to initiate community engagement and develop an outreach campaign to determine the willingness of folks to change their behavior such as: staying further away from the whales, slowing down vessels in the presence of whales, limiting the number of whale watching vessels, etc. They hope to accomplish this by reaching out to different interest groups, hosting educational workshops, and increasing boater awareness (particularly visiting boaters) by promoting the [Soundwatch Boater Education Program](#) and their [Be Whale Wise program](#), and installing interpretive signage at boat launches and marinas. In addition to education and outreach, they plan to work with WA Department of Fish and Wildlife to increase active enforcement of the regulations already in place.
- Another way they plan to take action is to help promote the [Port of Vancouver BC initiated a voluntary Vessel Slow Down trial](#) that will be starting August 7, 2017 – Oct 6, 2017 in the Haro Strait. The purpose is to evaluate the effectiveness of slowing vessels down to reduce acoustic impacts on whales. Potential financial and operational impacts to the shipping industry will also be evaluated. Several shipping companies have already confirmed their participation. MRC members discussed the role of the pilots and the importance of communicating this program to them so they will talk to the ship captains about slowing their vessels down.
- Marta said they would like to extend the awareness campaign to other neighboring areas such as Skagit County. Sarah suggested that Marta present this information to the Port of Anacortes Marina Advisory Committee and possibly the Washington Public Port's Annual Environmental Meeting in September. Pete suggested getting in touch with Beam Reach Marine Science and Sustainability school because they are involved in working with other partner to try to reduce acoustic impacts on whales. Skagit MRC members discussed different places where the 'Be Whale Wise' brochures could be distributed in Skagit County including: the Port of Anacortes, local marinas, boat charters, the Anacortes Visitors Bureau, and marine supply stores. Salish Sea Steward volunteer Gina Johnson offered to help distribute the brochures. Phyllis suggested that we try to keep the outreach message focused on this as a voluntary effort, not regulatory. Skagit MRC members also discussed the possibility of seeking funding to provide 'Be Whale Wise' signage at public boat launches and marinas. Unfortunately, because Skagit County does not currently have an LIO, Skagit MRC cannot apply for some of the funding available through the Puget Sound Partnership's Near Term Action Agenda. However, there are opportunities to partner with other counties that do have LIOs such as San Juan County.

Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Report: *Jamey Selleck and Jay Lind*

- Snohomish MRC's MyCoast App: Snohomish MRC developed a new smart phone app "[MyCoast app](#)" which can be used by citizen scientists to share photos and location data points for king tides, abandoned boats, storm surge, creosote logs and beach change. It could also have potential applications for other MRCs.
- MRC Funding: State funding for MRCs was approved by the state legislature for the 2017-2019 biennium, thanks to Tom Cowan and Senator Kevin Ranker. This funding will help supplement the 2017-2018 MRC Grant from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)/Puget Sound Partnership.
- 2018 Action Agenda Update and Near Term Action (NTA) solicitation process: The public comment period is now open for the Action Agenda update. This year there is a single solicitation period and technical review for the NTAs. The official request for project proposals will be issued September 28. The Partnership's State of the Sound report will be out in September.
- Salish Sea Studies Institute: Ginny Broadhurst is the Director of the newly established Salish Sea Studies Institute at Western Washington University. Ginny will be working to build connections and improve communications with a diverse group of local and regional partners and resources.
- Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference sessions: Lucas and Jamey submitted a conference session proposal that aims to highlight citizen science projects and kelp. Jamey also submitted a conference session proposal on rockfish.

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

- NWSF Operations/Administration: There has been some discussion about moving the Foundation office from Bellingham to Padilla Bay to share office space with the NWSC in order to save money. Heidi Lehman, Administrative Coordinator, left the NWSF mid-June for a new position. Nicole Jordan is now working with the NWSF one day a week as communications coordinator.
- New Animated Short Film: Caroline is looking for ideas on venues to roll-out their new animated short film created by Andrea Love about the Northwest Straits Initiative (NWSI). Please send ideas on venues to roll-out the new film to Caroline at gibson@nwstraitsfoundation.org.
- 2017-2018 Budget: The NWSF approved their 2017-2018 Budget at their June meeting.

Administrative Report: Tracy Alker

- MRC Progress Reports- Due July 18th (next Tuesday). Please send Tracy project updates and MRC related volunteer hours!
- MRC Staff meeting next Tuesday, July 18th
- 2018 Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference- The call for session proposals has been extended to July 28, 2017. The theme for this year's meeting is "Ecosystem Recovery in an International Transboundary System". The conference will be held in Seattle this year. There might be some funding available for some MRC members to attend the conference.
- MRC Display Help: We need volunteers to help host the MRC display and games at events. Please let Tracy know if you are interested in hosting the display at Fidalgo Bay Day (Aug 12th 11-3) and/or the Skagit River Salmon Festival (Sept 9th, 10-6). Please share ideas for updating posters and activities and for hosting activities.

Project Status & Discussion

- Bowman Bay Nearshore Restoration: A planting party hosted by the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group was held July 11th. Beach seining and forage fish surveys continue to occur on a monthly basis. The intertidal and woody debris monitoring took place on July 10th. They had a really great turnout of volunteers! Lots of park visitors were asking questions about the monitoring, so it was a great opportunity to do some outreach.
- Tide Pool Interpretive Sign: The panel was printed and sign base fabricated and delivered to Washington Park in Anacortes. It is anticipated that the sign will be installed by August 15th. A dedicated group of eight Salish Sea Stewards from the class of 2017 is in the process of developing a survey to evaluate the effectiveness of the sign.
- Fidalgo Bay Day: The event will be held Saturday, August 12, 2017 at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort. The event is being widely advertised in the paper and online. A crew of volunteers has also been putting up posters all over town. Thanks to Nate, Shell Puget Sound Refinery is providing some funding for Fidalgo Bay Day this year through the Friends of Skagit Beaches. The money will be used to pay for some things that the MRC Grant can't be used for. Some of the highlights of this year's event include: Shannon Point Marine Center's aquarium touch tank, beach seining demonstration, educational displays and activities, kid-friendly crafts and games, discovery stations along the Tommy Thompson Trail, passport activities and prizes, complimentary samples of local seafood, and Samish no-host BBQ salmon lunch. New this year, visitors will get to create luminarias with tea lights for a lighted procession to be held later in the day. Visitors and event participants will also have an opportunity to help create a large mural that will be hung on the wall. Katylani Siplin, an AmeriCorps with the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group, designed the Fidalgo Bay Day mural which will be cut into large squares for each person to color and place on the wall as one large mural. At the MRC meeting, Katylani shared a similar mural that she did as a project with one of the local elementary schools. She also shared a small sketch of what the Fidalgo Bay Day mural will look like. Unfortunately, Katylani will be starting graduate school soon so she will not be able to attend Fidalgo Bay Day to see the finished product. Pete confirmed most of the displays. It looks like we will have a full house of displays and activities! Gina Johnson is the new food service lead. Morty is in charge of the parking crew and Sarah is the lead for face painting. Pete is looking for volunteers to help with the craft tables. Tracy could also use some help with the MRC display and games.
- Salish Sea Stewards: 26 out of the 34 new Salish Sea Stewards graduates completed a two page survey. The planning committee will be meeting in September to review the survey results and where the volunteers are contributing most of their volunteers in order to help develop and improve next year's training program. Two new Salish Sea Stewards, Gina Johnson and Rachel Best, joined the Salish Sea Stewards planning subcommittee. Morty said that one of the challenges has been in recruiting volunteers to help with intertidal monitoring. Although the intertidal monitoring at Skagit MRC's Bowman Bay restoration site was well attended, only a few new Salish Sea Stewards showed up to help with the monitoring at the Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve this year. The thought is that it could be due to the physical demands for some of the older volunteers, the long hours, and the comfort level of volunteers in species identification. It should also be noted that the Salish Sea Stewards are primarily being encouraged to support MRC projects so there is less emphasis on recruiting volunteers to support non MRC projects such as DNR's Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve.. The only intertidal monitoring that the MRC is involved in is at Bowman Bay and March's Point.
- Olympia Oyster Restoration: Most of the monitoring has been completed. The oyster settlement from last year was very good (about the third highest in 15 years!). Paul is working with the WA Department of Fish and Wildlife to put out stacks of tiles to test a new type of substrate for oyster settlement to compare how it does in conjunction with shell strings and cultch bags. They will be collecting data every two weeks, instead of just once a year. They've already started seeing settlement of a few native oysters around the first of July. Paul plans to check the sample bags out at Cypress Island next month.
- Pinto Abalone Restoration: The field work was done in early spring. The final report will be completed by September 30th.

- Forage Fish Index Site Surveys: Monthly surveys continue at Skagit MRC's three Forage Fish Index sites: Ship Harbor, Similk Bay on the Swinomish Reservation, and Samish Island. Surf smelt eggs have been observed at the Similk Bay sites, but no smelt eggs have ever been found at the Ship Harbor or Samish Island sites.
- European Green Crab Monitoring: Monitoring continues. To date, only two green crabs of the same cohort have been found in Padilla Bay.
- Weaverling Spit Beach Nourishment Restoration: The Weaverling Spit Restoration project was originally scheduled to be completed last fall, but had to be delayed for another year due to permitting issues. Unfortunately, the project bids came in much higher than the original cost estimates so Todd had to request additional funding from the Samish Indian Nation's Tribal Council. Fortunately, they were extremely generous and approved additional funding to help move this project forward. The bid has been awarded and they should be under contract with the bid winner in a week or two. Construction will begin September 5th and is anticipated to take just two weeks to complete.
- Recreational Crabber Outreach: Gina reported that Salish Sea Stewards conducted crabber outreach to 342 crabbers at boat launches on opening weekend. Outreach packets included a crab gauge, WDFW regulations, escape cord sample, and 'Catch More Crab' rack cards. Volunteers documented the comments and questions received and made suggestions for improving crabber outreach in 2018. Gina suggested that it would be great for the volunteers to have some kind of crabber outreach training prior to going out and talking to crabbers. It would be good for the volunteers to have a clear understanding about how to rig a crab pot properly with biodegradable escape cords, and to be familiar with some of the regulations. The Committee recommended volunteers check out the crabber outreach [videos](#) created by the Northwest Straits Foundation. They also suggested that the volunteers don't answer regulatory questions but instead should refer the crabbers to contact the WA Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). WDFW has a lot of great information about crabbing, including an informative [video](#), on their [website](#). Articles about the NWSI crabber outreach were published in the [Anacortes American](#) and the [Skagit Valley Herald](#).
- Kayak Kelp Surveys: Zoe Zilz was hired by the Northwest Straits Foundation in June as the summer kelp coordinator. MRC kelp survey volunteers recently participated in a phone conference with Zoey. Three new Salish Sea Stewards and volunteers from the Anacortes Kayak Club will be helping with kelp monitoring this year. With the additional help we will be able to increase the number of survey sites to three this year including: Coffin Rock, Shannon Point, and Biz Point. Kimberly Cauvel, a reporter with the Skagit Valley Herald, is interested in doing a story about the kelp monitoring.

Miscellaneous Events and Announcements:

- Marine Renewable Energy Seminar Series- August 8 at Padilla Bay (6:30pm-8:30pm). Other dates include: August 15 at the Olympic Natural Resources Center, Forks (7:00pm-9:00pm); and August 21 at the Northwest Maritime Center in Pt Townsend (6:00pm-8:00pm). Seminars are free and open to the public! Learn about the current status of marine energy research, and what forces will shape its development, particularly in Washington State. Discuss the environmental, social and engineering challenges (and opportunities!), as well as current research to understand and proactively address these issues. This series is coordinated by Washington Sea Grant (WSG), in partnership with the Northwest Straits Commission and the Skagit, Jefferson and North Pacific Coast Marine Resources Committees.
- Taste of Padilla Bay – with a Hint of Maine- Aug 19: The Padilla Bay Foundation will hold their auction dinner fundraiser on Saturday, August 19th at the Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve. This year's fundraiser will support a Touch Pool Experience in Padilla Bay's aquarium room as well as the Coastal Volunteer Partnership Program. The event will feature a sumptuous buffet and both a silent and live auction with live music by Jumbled Pie.

The meeting adjourned at 11:10 a.m. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, August 10 2017, at the Fidalgo Bay Resort in Anacortes (4701 Fidalgo Bay Rd, Anacortes)



SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the August 10, 2017 Skagit County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) meeting, held at the Fidalgo Bay Resort in Anacortes (4701 Fidalgo Bay Rd, Anacortes)

Attendees:

- **MRC Members Attending:** Jay Lind, Paul Dinnel, Julie Barber, Nathan Biletnikoff, Sarah Tchang, Todd Woodard, Phyllis Bravinder, Jude Apple, Jamey Selleck, Betsy Stevenson
- **MRC Members Absent:** Tracy Alker, Matt Reynolds
- **Others Attending:** Pete Haase (Morty's alternate); Richard Brocksmitth, Skagit Watershed Council; Clair Cook, PBNERR; Charlette Thurman, SCPW; Tim Manns (MRC alternate, Skagit Land Trust); Samantha Russell, CVP

Call to Order and Introduction: Jamey Selleck called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. and opened the meeting with introductions.

Approval of Minutes: The July 13, 2017, MRC meeting minutes were approved as written.

Public Comments:

- **In Memoriam, Kit Rawson:** MRC members were deeply saddened by the recent passing of Skagit MRC member Kit Rawson. The committee talked about how Kit was an inspiration to many who knew him and how he brought a wealth of scientific knowledge, enthusiasm, positive energy, and a fresh new perspective to the MRC. Kit dedicated much of his life to salmon recovery and conservation efforts. He served on the board of the Skagit Land Trust and the SeaDoc Society. He was a valuable part of our local community and will be greatly missed.
- **Marine-Related Projects in Skagit County:** Richard Brocksmitth listed off a few salmon related projects that are going on in Skagit County that he thought might be of some interest to the MRC including: 1) Similk Tidal Marsh Restoration. The feasibility study and conceptual designs have been completed. Additional funding is needed for project design; 2) Kukutali Preserve Tombolo Restoration. The feasibility study and final design have been completed and the permits are ready to go. Construction has been put on hold until funding becomes available; 3) Deepwater Slough Alternative Analysis (Phase 2); 4) Milltown Island Restoration Projects; and 4) Skagit Forks Wetland Reconnection. Richard said he would be happy to share more detailed information about any of these projects if the MRC is interested.
- **Anchorage; Captain of the Port Puget Sound Zone, WA:** Although the public comment period recently ended August 9th, Phyllis wanted to make sure that MRC members were aware of the US Coast Guard's Anchorages Proposal to create several anchorage zones and holding areas in the Puget Sound area including five areas in Skagit County waters near Samish, Guemes, and Vendovi Islands. The purpose is to provide stricter anchor zones to enhance safer navigation for maritime traffic instead of allowing ships to anchor wherever they want. The US Coast Guard has made the determination that this proposal does not require an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) because it will not cause an increase in vessel traffic or use of the sites. Many of the organizations who commented recommended a full scale EIS to ensure the sensitive marine habitats will be protected.

Oil Dispersants: William King, PhD candidate at the U.W. Friday Harbor Labs

The University of Washington Friday Harbor Labs was contracted by the National Estuaries Program to write a literature review on the effectiveness and ecological consequences of oil dispersants in San Juan County waters. Chemical dispersants can break up large oil slicks into tiny oil droplets. The different types of dispersants vary in the levels of effectiveness and toxicity. Both dispersants and chemically dispersed oil are toxic, but not necessarily more toxic than oil itself. Most dispersants alone are only slightly toxic. However, when slightly toxic dispersants are combined with oil they become moderately toxic. UV light can also increase the level of toxicity. We have some data on the impacts on habitats and organisms but lack comparisons. There remains considerable uncertainty about the tradeoffs of using dispersants and evidence is mixed on whether dispersants promote biodegradation.

The decision flowchart for determining the best actions to take in case of an oil spill can be found in the [Northwest Area Contingency Plan \(NWACP\)](#). If an oil spill occurs, the first line of action is to determine if the use of mechanical methods (e.g. skimming, booming, absorption pads) would be feasible or sufficient. If not, other alternatives like chemical dispersants would be considered. Below is part of the decision process for deciding whether or not to use dispersants:

- **Is dispersant use allowed at the spill site?** The use of dispersants is not allowed in most Skagit County waters. There are some areas in the San Juans and Canadian waters that will be considered the use of dispersants on a case-by-case basis in waters that are at least 60 ft deep and 3 nautical miles of shoreline.
- **Is the oil chemically dispersible?** Oils vary by physical and chemical characteristics which can change how dispersible they are. Generally, the light and medium oils can be dispersed. But the very light and heavy cannot. Most crude oils transported around here are medium.
- **Is the right type of dispersant readily available?** There are currently 18 types of dispersants that the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) allows. The only dispersant Washington State currently has in stock is Corexit 9500, but there are potentially better choices out there. The type of dispersants kept in stock is up to industry and the responders (e.g. US Coast Guard and WA Dept. of Ecology). Not all dispersant types are produced in mass quantities and might be harder to obtain and keep in stock.
- **Are conditions conducive?** Dispersant effectiveness will depend on various real-time environmental conditions; in particular, in San Juan County the type of oil, the state of the oil slick, and ocean mixing energy are the key factors for dispersant effectiveness.
- **Will using dispersants reduce the overall impact of the oil spill?** Dispersants will only be used if the oil spill is really bad and if doing so will decrease the overall harm of a large oil spill, especially along sensitive shorelines.

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

- **2017-2018 Northwest Straits Commission Budget:** The Commission authorized the 2017-2018 Northwest Straits Commission budget which includes Washington State funding and pending funds from EPA (via the Puget Sound Partnership) and NOAA (via the Northwest Straits Foundation for a kelp recovery plan). Each MRC will receive \$1,000 of State funding and \$73,000 from the EPA (via the Puget Sound Partnership) for a total of \$74,000.
- **Next NWSC Meeting:** The next Commission meeting will be August 25, from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM at the Pacific Rim Institute in Coupeville, WA.

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

- **NWSF Board:** The NWSF Board continues to meet every other month.
- **The Rose Foundation Grant:** Jay suggested the MRC consider seeking funding through Rose Foundation Grant to help support the Salish Sea Stewards program. The NWSF might be able to help apply for the grant. Samantha noted that she has already applied for a few small grants that could potentially help augment the program.
- **Jack Hartt Retirement Celebration:** Jack Hartt, Park Manager of Deception Pass State Park, is planning to retire in October. Jay is working with the Island MRC and the Northwest Straits Foundation to plan a celebration for Jack to show our appreciation for his collaboration on multiple projects. Jack has been instrumental in planning and implementing several of our projects and has been such a pleasure to work with.

Administrative Report: *Tracy Alker*

No updates

Marine Renewable Energy Seminar Report: *Nate Biletnikoff*

- Approximately 30-40 people attended the seminar at Padilla Bay. Nate provided welcoming remarks including a nice tribute to Kit Rawson. The speakers included PhD and postdoc students from the University of Washington who shared some of the basics about marine renewable energy technology, how the devices work and their potential impacts on marine life, some of the engineering challenges, and the economic outlook. One example of the research that has been done is on the strength of an orca skin and the potential for the devices to abrade the whales. Results indicated that the devices wouldn't likely cut into the marine animals. In addition, fish have been observed completely avoiding the devices. Todd noted that these behavioral stressors are a concern for the tribes. As for the economic outlook, the marine renewable energy industry most likely wouldn't have any new job growth until about 2030 and the total added jobs wouldn't be that significant.

Evaluation of the Drainages/Discharges Near the March Point Recreation Area Public Shellfish Beach

- MRC members discussed the report from the Washington State Department of Health regarding the shellfish beach closure at east March's Point due to unhealthy levels of fecal coliform bacteria. The Health Department is working

with the Skagit County Public Works Clean Water Program to determine the next steps. Committee members asked Betsy to follow-up with the County to find out what actions are being taken and the approximate timeline.

Project Status & Discussion

- **Bowman Bay Nearshore Restoration:** A planting/maintenance party hosted by the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group was held August 8th. Beach seining and forage fish surveys continue to occur on a monthly basis.
- **Tide Pool Interpretive Sign:** The sign has been installed at Washington Park in Anacortes. A dedicated group of eight Salish Sea developed a survey to evaluate the effectiveness of the sign. Volunteers will begin surveying beach visitors soon.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** The event will be held this Saturday, August 12, 2017 at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort. Phyllis will be at the main entrance table to welcome folks to the event and will also be conducting interviews. Some of the highlights of this year's event include: Shannon Point Marine Center's aquarium touch tank, beach seining demonstration, educational displays and activities, kid-friendly crafts and games, passport discovery stations, complimentary samples of local seafood, and Samish no-host BBQ salmon lunch. New this year, visitors will get to create luminarias with tea lights for a lighted procession to be held later in the day. Visitors and event participants will also have an opportunity to help create a large mural that will be hung on the wall designed by Katylani Siplin, an AmeriCorps with the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group.
- **Salish Sea Stewards:** 22 people are now on the wait list for next year's training. We will have our first planning committee meeting in early September. The surveys that were completed by the participants in this year's training will be used to help make improvements to the program.
- **Olympia Oyster Restoration:** Most of the field work is done. Paul met with Brady Blake from the WA Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) to look at the oyster shell beds on the east side of Fidalgo Bay. The native oyster density appeared to be very high. They also took a look at the east side of March's Point to see if it might be a good location to transfer oyster seed to enhance the native oyster spawning and settlement in that area in the next year or so. Paul is also working with WDFW to put out stacks of ceramic tiles at four locations in Fidalgo Bay and collecting two of those at two week intervals to monitor oyster settlement. They observed light to moderate settlement in the last six weeks. Paul will also be processing another batch that they recently collected. Paul, with the help of volunteers and WA Department of Natural Resources (DNR) staff, collected shell bags at Cypress Island. They discovered that the shell bag in the highest channel had total mortality. The intermediate channel bag had a very low survival rate and the shell bag in the lower channel had excellent survival and excellent growth rates of native oysters. The oyster shell bag outside of the tidal channel had moderate survival. Paul also collected the recording sensors to monitor temperature and salinity in the channels at Cypress Island. Results will be compiled into a report soon. Paul is considering putting the recording sensors in the channels near Sharpe's Corner in Fidalgo Bay next year where they recently discovered a healthy Olympia oyster population.
- **Pinto Abalone Restoration:** The field work was done in early spring. The final report will be completed by September 30th.
- **Forage Fish Index Site Surveys:** Monthly surveys continue at Skagit MRC's three Forage Fish Index sites: Ship Harbor, Similk Bay on the Swinomish Reservation, and Samish Island. Fish eggs have been found at the Similk Bay site, but not at Ship Harbor. Ship Harbor was probably never a forage fish spawning site. The data collected is important to show the big picture. The data is sent to WDFW for processing and will eventually be posted on Sound IQ.
- **European Green Crab Monitoring:** Monitoring will continue in Padilla and Fidalgo Bays through mid-September. Just this week they found a dead green crab in Padilla Bay that was likely left by a bird. It was from the same age group as the other two green crabs found in Padilla Bay.
- **Weaverling Spit Beach Nourishment/ Restoration:** The Samish Indian Nation is now under contract for the beach nourishment project. The beach nourishment material has been approved by Coastal Geologic Services. Construction will begin September 5th and is anticipated to take less than two weeks to complete. Trucks will be hauling/dumping 600 cubic yards of material each day in order to get it done by September 16th.
- **Kayak Kelp Surveys:** Holly Garland (Northwest Straits Initiative intern) and Lucas are working on the draft bull kelp condition index protocol. The Northwest Straits Foundation hired Zoe Zilz as the new Kelp Coordinator. The position is only for a few months during this year's kelp survey season. 14 people attended the kayak-based kelp survey training in July, including a couple of volunteers from The Hole in the Wall Kayak Club. Three sites have been selected to survey this year including: Coffin Rock, Shannon Point Marine Center, and Biz Point. Samantha recommended that we try to better define what the goals are for this project and what information we are trying to get from these surveys in Skagit County. It's important to be able to communicate the goals to the volunteers who are involved with this project. Jamey suggested contacting Lucas to help define the goals. Todd noted that the Samish Indian Nation is also

conducting kelp surveys via motorized boat to look at the overall change to the kelp beds over time. However, their boat is currently out of commission. They started looking at aerial surveys and started re-digitizing some of them for comparison.

Miscellaneous Events and Announcements:

- Skagit River Salmon Festival- September 9, Edgewater Park in Mount Vernon: Skagit MRC will be hosting a display and games and passport activity.
- Taste of Padilla Bay – with a Hint of Maine- Aug 19: The Padilla Bay Foundation will hold their auction dinner fundraiser on Saturday, August 19th at the Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve. This year's fundraiser will support a Touch Pool Experience in Padilla Bay's aquarium room as well as the Coastal Volunteer Partnership Program. The event will feature a sumptuous buffet and both a silent and live auction with live music by Jumbled Pie.
- Samish Indian Nation's Marine Debris Removal Program Update: To date, approximately 0.5 million pounds of marine debris (mostly creosote) has been removed!

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, September 14, 2017, at the Skagit County Administration Building in Mount Vernon.



SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the September 14, 2017 Skagit County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) meeting, held at the Fidalgo Bay Resort in Anacortes (4701 Fidalgo Bay Rd, Anacortes)

Attendees:

- **MRC Members Attending:** Jay Lind, Paul Dinnel, Julie Barber, Nathan Biletnikoff, Sarah Tchang, Todd Woodard, Phyllis Bravinder, Suzanne Shull (Jude Apple's Alternate), Jamey Selleck, Betsy Stevenson, Morty Cohen, Tracy Alker, Tim Manns (Kit Rawson's Alternate)
- **MRC Members Absent:** Matt Reynolds, Jude Apple
- **Others Attending:** Pete Haase (Morty's alternate); Charles O'Hara, former MRC member; Charlette Thurman, SCPW; Samantha Russell, CVP; Lisa Kaufman, NWSF; Jason Morgan, NWSF; Rich Carlson, USFWS

Call to Order and Introduction: Jamey Selleck called the meeting to order at 9:08 a.m. and opened the meeting with introductions.

Approval of Minutes: The August 10, 2017, MRC meeting minutes were approved as written.

Public Comments:

- Celebration of Life - Kit Rawson: Jay attended the Celebration of the Life of Kit Rawson on September 9th. The Tulalip Tribe hosted the service and Terry Williams was the Master of Ceremonies. It was very nice and well attended by over 300 people.
- NOAA's Rockfish and Kelp Recovery: Jamey shared that he is working with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) on rockfish and kelp recovery. They have a bunch of fish descending devices that are being distributed to anglers through the Puget Sound Anglers Association and other recreational fishing organizations and communities to help reduce the effects of barotrauma on rockfish. Barotrauma results when a fish is brought up from the depths too quickly, causing the swim bladder to expand beyond its normal size. Contact Jamey if you know of any other groups or organizations where these fish descending devices could be distributed. Jason suggested contacting the Coastal Conservation Association.
- Atlantic Salmon Net Pen Escapement at Cypress Island: Jay is interested in discussing the Atlantic salmon escapement at Cypress Island at our next MRC meeting in October or November. Lisa recommended including the WA Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in the conversation since they lease the aquatic lands at Cypress Island for aquaculture. Betsy pointed out that DNR has a [web page](#) dedicated to the investigation into the Cypress Island Atlantic salmon net pen break with daily updates. She suggested the Committee wait until after DNR's investigation is complete before having the net pen discussion.

WWU Salish Sea Institute: Ginny Broadhurst

Western Washington University (WWU) recently established the Salish Sea Institute and hired Ginny Broadhurst as the Director of the new program in June 2017. The Salish Sea Institute is housed in the Canada House at WWU along with the Border Policy Research Institute and the Center for Canadian-American Studies. The program was established to address the need for ongoing dialogue and collaborative actions across cultural and international boundaries that serve to restore and protect the health of the Salish Sea. It provides a mechanism and platform for education, research, and public outreach, and helps to facilitate and cultivate collaborative governance and protection of the Salish Sea. Ginny is putting together an advisory committee to figure out a way to affect change from a transboundary perspective. She is also in the process of developing an interdisciplinary curriculum for a minor in Salish Sea Studies. She plans to collaborate with other academic institutions throughout the region to share the curriculum and resources that help foster a sense of place and value and protection of the Salish Sea. The minor will likely be in place by fall of 2018 or 2019. The long-term goal is to eventually develop a graduate program. There are several existing programs that will serve under the umbrella of the Salish Sea Institute including:

- Redfish School of Change: A field study that takes place each summer designed for people who want to lead the way in creating ecological sustainability and social equity in their communities. It is a partnership between the School of Environmental Studies at the University of Victoria, Huxley College of the Environment and the Center for Canadian-American Studies at Western Washington University, and Green Learning Canada.
- Salish Sea Speaker Series at Northwest Indian College: An annual Salish Sea Speaker Series in partnership with the Northwest Indian College and the Huxley College of the Environment Speaker Series.

- [Salish Sea EcoSystem Conference](#): It is the largest conference of its kind in the region that brings together scientists, tribal representatives, resource managers, community/business leaders, policy makers, educators and students from the U.S. and British Columbia to share the latest scientific research and actions for protecting and restoring the Salish Sea Ecosystem. The next conference will be held April 4-6, 2018 at the Washington State Convention Center in Seattle Washington. Planning is well underway. For the first time, the conference will have three co-chairs representing United States, Canada, and Tribal Country.

Lisa asked what role the MRCs could play to help the Salish Sea Institute program flourish. Ginny said that there might be a few possibilities such as helping to establish MRCs further north in the Gulf Islands region of British Columbia, or helping to expand Sound IQ or the Salish Sea Stewards program. The Salish Sea EcoSystems Conference is also an excellent opportunity for MRCs to build new relationships across the border. Ginny said she is always open to new ideas and hopes to revisit the MRC to provide an update on how the Salish Sea Institute is coming along. For questions about the program, contact Ginny at: Ginny.Broadhurst@wwu.edu or 360-650-4075.

Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Report: *Nate Biletnikoff*

- [Island County MRC Presentation](#): Barbara Bennett from Island MRC presented on what they are doing in relation to developing a long-term strategic plan and how to tie their efforts into the overall work of the Northwest Straits Initiative. They developed a questionnaire focused on improving communications with stakeholders and key decision makers in their county government and their role as an advisory committee. They conducted 40 different interviews and collected feedback. Their next step is to start developing white papers for specific issues that might come up in their county.
 - [Action Item](#): Nate suggested that Skagit MRC revisit the discussion regarding the Committee's role as an advisory committee to the County Commissioners.
 - [Action Item](#): Tracy will forward Island County MRC's presentation to the Skagit MRC as soon as it is available.
- [Defining Ecosystem Health Presentation](#): Ron Thom and Tom Mumford gave a presentation on defining ecosystem health by building a model that will aide in reporting, documenting, and quantifying ecosystem impacts resulting from MRC projects. They plan to start making the rounds to all of the MRCs to present the model after it is complete.
 - [Action Item](#): Rich Carlson will forward a copy of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's brochure "Investing in Nature, The Economic Benefits of Protecting Our Lands and Waters" and the WA Department of Ecology's report "The Natural Economy of the Nisqually Watershed" by Earth Economics, to the Skagit MRC.
- [Rose Foundation Grant Funding](#): San Juan County MRC expressed interest in applying for the Rose Foundation Grant to help address the stormwater runoff issue at the Orcas Island Ferry Terminal. They discussed the possibility of installing permeable pavers.
- [Next NWSC Meeting](#): The next Commission meeting will be September 29th, 10:00a.m. - 12:30pm via WebEx.

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

- [NWSF Board](#): The NWSF Board continues to meet every other month.
- [Fundraising](#): Caroline is reaching out to businesses and corporations to help build a strong base of donors. The Foundation also plans to host a silent auction at the 2017 conference to help raise funds.
- [Jack Hartt Retirement Celebration](#): Jack Hartt, Park Manager of Deception Pass State Park, is retiring the end of October. A celebration honoring Jack's 40 years of service will be held Saturday, October 28th at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort.
 - [Action Item](#): Jay will try to get more details and report back at the next MRC meeting.
- [Derelict Gear in the News](#): The Puget Sound Anglers newspaper "The Reel News" recently published an article about derelict nets. Unfortunately, the article was published without being reviewed or approved by the Northwest Straits Foundation. Although the article was written with good intentions, it had a very negative tone which is what the Foundation is trying to steer away from. The Foundation has been working really hard to develop a more positive campaign in an effort to get fishermen to report lost nets. The derelict gear removal program will only be successful if there is cooperation from the fishermen.
- [Outreach Opportunity](#): The La Conner Weekly News is seeking stories about the marine environment. Jay contacted the paper about the possibility of doing a series of articles on behalf of the Northwest Straits Initiative and Skagit MRC.

Administrative Report: *Tracy Alker*

- **Marine Debris Workshop:** Tracy asked if any MRC members would be interested in representing the Skagit MRC at the upcoming Marine debris Workshop on December 5 and 6, 2017 at Ocean Shores. Nate volunteered to attend the workshop.
- **MRC Grant Deliverables Due - Sept 30th!** Tracy asked MRC members to submit their hours, project reports, and invoices and receipts for reimbursement before the MRC Grant expires September 30, 2017.
- **2017-2018 MRC Grant:** The grant is in the process of getting finalized and routed for signature. It will have a start date of October 1, 2017, but probably won't actually get signed until mid to late October. Tracy will work with the project leads to get the sub-award agreements and associated contracts drafted and signed.
- **MRC Display:** Tracy thanked Betsy, Charlette, and Heather for helping with the MRC display at the Skagit River Salmon Festival this year. The display focused on tide pools and guidelines to help protect the critters that live there.

Project Status & Discussion

- **Bowman Bay Nearshore Restoration:** A planting/maintenance party, beach seining, and forage fish survey occurred on September 12th. Although it was advertised as being one of the Skagit Water Weeks events, just a small handful of folks from the public showed up. Surf smelt eggs were found at Bowman Bay for the first time since conducting the surveys three or four years ago. It just goes to show how important long-term monitoring is. The shoreline plantings seem to be doing well, but some maintenance is still needed. The dune grass is really starting to get well established. Some of the plants that were originally thought to be dead actually have some new growth. The public is really starting to take notice of the restoration work and seem pleased with the results.
- **Tide Pool Interpretive Sign:** The sign was installed at Washington Park in Anacortes during the first week of August. A short survey has been developed for volunteers to interview beach goers at Washington Park to help evaluate the effectiveness of the sign. The survey form can be downloaded directly from the [Coastal Volunteer Partnership's website](#). Surveys must be completed before the grant expires at the end of this month (September 30, 2017). Unfortunately, very few volunteers have expressed interest in helping with the surveys.
 - **Action Item:** Skagit County Intern, Charlette Thurman, offered to go out and conduct a few surveys. MRC members are also encouraged to download the survey questions and help conduct a few interviews.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** The event was held Saturday, August 12, 2017 at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort. Pete shared a slide show of the festivities at the MRC meeting. An estimated 400 people attended this year's event and over 200 people participated in the passport activity. 45 volunteers, 22 organizations, and 6 local businesses helped make this year's event a huge success. Over 42 exit surveys were completed with a lot of positive feedback. The Fidalgo Bay Day report is now complete and is available for anyone who wants a copy. Some of the event highlights included: aquarium touch tank, a gray whale skull, beach seining demonstration, educational displays and activities, kid-friendly crafts and games, passport discovery stations and prizes, complimentary samples of local seafood, and Samish no-host BBQ salmon lunch. Participants helped color a large mural that was hung on the wall and created luminaries for a lighted procession. Pete brought the completed mural to the MRC meeting and mounted it on the wall. Many thanks to Shell for their donation which helped pay for event signage, passport prizes, volunteer caps, food for some of the special helpers and guests, and several other miscellaneous things. Pete announced that 2018 will be the last year he will be the Project Lead/Event Chair. He hopes to find a volunteer to shadow him in 2018 so that they can take the lead in 2019. The Committee thanked Pete for doing such an excellent job as the Project Lead for the last two years! Pete said that he would also like to give special recognition to the Samish Tribe for hosting Fidalgo Bay Day at their beautiful facility and for their continued support over the years. He suggested the MRC give the Samish Tribe a plaque as a special "Thank You".
- **Salish Sea Stewards:** The first planning committee meeting was held September 9th. The team reviewed and discussed the surveys that were completed by the participants from this year's training. The next planning meeting will be held in October. Samantha reported that the 35 volunteers from the class of 2017 Salish Sea Stewards contributed 1,235 volunteer hours during the first 6 months. In comparison, the 19 volunteers from the class of 2016 Salish Sea Stewards contributed 1,060 hours during that same 6 month period. The class of 2016 volunteer hours declined slightly during the second year, contributing a total of 1,800 volunteer hours to date. For the 2018 training,



Samantha is recommending capping the class at 30. She said that a smaller group would be easier to manage and the participants would receive more individualized attention to help them get more out of the program. It is anticipated that we will have over 30 applications. Morty said that the planning committee is considering coming up with a process to screen the applicants instead of going by a first come first serve basis. Please let Morty know if you have any ideas for screening applicants. Samantha said the main reason for not accepting applications on a first come first serve basis is because many applicants will end up dropping out at the last minute if there is no real incentive or obligation to commit to the training. Another idea that is being considered is to charge a small fee to help provide some incentive for applicants to commit to the training. The class fee could be used towards purchasing training materials or field trips. Samantha announced that the Coastal Volunteer Partnership's (CVP) electronic news bulletin is now being archived on the CVP website: <http://www.coastalvolunteerpartnership.org/the-wave/>.

- **Olympia Oyster Restoration:** We just finished up the 15th season of native oyster restoration work in Fidalgo Bay. There was a moderate recruitment of native oysters this year, compared to the previous two years which had a very high recruitment of native oysters. There are now approximately 4 to 5 million native oysters living in Fidalgo Bay. The big increase in the native oyster population is likely due to the new shell beds that were put out there a couple of years ago that now help support a large spawning population of native oysters. Paul talked to Brady Blake about transferring shell over to the east side of March's Point in Padilla Bay next year. The oyster seed that was distributed last year at Cypress Island in the newly restored marsh area is doing well in one of the channels with water in it full time. Paul pointed out that one limitation at Cypress Island is that there is still quite a bit of sedimentation in some of the channels. After the restoration site matures and the sediment becomes more compact, it might become a good place to put some Olympia oyster seed. Results from the data sensors that were placed in the channels at Cypress Island to monitor temperature and salinity will be compiled into a report soon. Paul relocated the data sensors to the channels near Sharpe's Corner in Fidalgo Bay where a volunteer recently discovered a healthy population of Olympia oysters. Paul is also working with the WA Department of Fish and Wildlife to distribute and monitor stacks of ceramic tiles at four locations in Fidalgo Bay for native oyster settlement. Data is collected from two of the ceramic tile stacks at two week intervals. Preliminary results indicate light to moderate settlement.
- **Pinto Abalone Restoration:** Paul is working with Josh to complete the final report by September 30th.
- **Forage Fish Index Site Surveys:** Monthly surveys continue at Skagit MRC's three Forage Fish Index sites: Ship Harbor, Similk Bay on the Swinomish Reservation, and Samish Island. Charlette said that after sampling for over a year, they finally found forage fish eggs at Ship Harbor for the very first time! To verify, Pete went out about a week later to take another sample and also found some eggs. The samples will be sent to the WA Department of Fish and Wildlife for analysis and confirmation.
- **European Green Crab Monitoring:** Monitoring went very well this summer and is finishing up for the season. Tomorrow will be the last day of sampling for the year in Fidalgo Bay.
- **Weaverling Spit Beach Nourishment/Restoration:** Construction began September 5th and is anticipated to be done by September 16th.
- **Kayak Kelp Surveys:** We are finishing up with the kelp surveys for the season. The three survey sites in Skagit County include: Coffin Rock, Shannon Point Marine Center, and Biz Point. This year we have 15 volunteers helping with the kelp surveys compared to last year when we had only two! Kimberly Cauvel from the Skagit Valley Herald is writing a story on the kelp recovery project. She will be meeting the volunteers at the Bowman Bay survey site this weekend. Samantha would like to try to re-launch the kelp survey 123 app again for volunteers to record where the different kelp beds are located in Skagit County to help identify potential new kelp beds to survey. All of the bugs have been worked out with the app, so it should go more smoothly with the next launch. The nice thing about this app is that anyone with a smart phone can help with this kelp recovery effort without even getting wet. It's also a great way to increase the visibility of the MRC and get more volunteers involved in our work. There will be more discussion about the 123 survey app at the MRC conference. Suzanne Shull said that she recently had a meeting with Lucas, Zoey Zilz, Caroline Gibson, and Tom Mumford in Port Townsend about the kelp monitoring project and where the data is going and how it is being used. Many state and local organizations aren't even aware that this data exists. We now have three years of data at several sites in the northwest straits region and can start looking at the changes in kelp beds over time at each location. For example, they have already detected a change in the kelp beds in Snohomish County, where they appear to be losing acreage of kelp. Phyllis noted the importance of communicating to the volunteers and the public the reason why we are doing this kelp recovery work and what we are doing with the data we are collecting.

Miscellaneous Events and Announcements:

- **Swinomish Channel Beach Cleanup- Saturday, September 16:** Skagit MRC is partnering with the Coastal Volunteer Partnership, and RE-Sources to host a shore-side cleanup event at the Swinomish Channel as part of the International Coastal Cleanup effort. Volunteers will be doing some data collection using the clean swell app and the International Coastal Cleanup sheet.
- **Shoreline Landowner Workshop- Saturday, September 23:** The Northwest Straits Foundation and the Skagit MRC are offering a free workshop for Skagit County marine shoreline landowners, September 23, 9:30am to 12:30pm at the Fidalgo Bay Resort Convention Center, in Anacortes (4701 Fidalgo Bay Rd). Betsy Stevenson will be there to welcome the group and give the introduction on behalf of the Skagit MRC. Register online: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SkagitFall17>, by phone: 360-733-1725 or contact Lisa Kaufman at kaufman@nwstraitsfoundation.org. Free technical site visits are also available.
- **Volunteer Celebration at Washington Park- Thursday, September 28:** Come and enjoy some delicious food and thank a volunteer at Washington Park on Thursday, September 28th, 2pm – 4pm.
- **Fidalgo Shoreline Academy- Saturday, October 21:** Friends of Skagit Beaches is sponsoring their 6th annual Fidalgo Shoreline Academy on Saturday, October 21, 2017, 9am-3:30pm at the NW Education Services District Building in Anacortes (1601 R Ave). The keynote address is “The Effects of a Global Decline in Biodiversity” presented by Dr. Phoebe Barnard, Executive Director at the Pacific Biodiversity Institute. Free clock hours are available for teachers. The cost is just \$30 for the entire day of learning (\$40 with lunch)! Event proceeds are used to support the mission of Friends including public education and volunteer programs.
- **Friends of Skagit Beaches Lecture Series:** Pete shared that the Friends of Skagit Beaches lecture series planning committee is in the process of finalizing the list of lectures that will be presented in the spring of 2018. The final schedule will be available soon.

The meeting adjourned at 10:50 a.m. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, October 12, 2017, at the Fidalgo Bay Resort in Anacortes (4701 Fidalgo Bay Rd)

(*A Skagit Restoration Initiative planning meeting was held following the regular MRC meeting. The meeting was attended by: Lisa Kaufman, Jason Morgan, Jamey Selleck, Jay Lind, and Tracy Alker. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss different project ideas for the remaining funds. A follow-up report will be provided at the next MRC meeting)



SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the October 12, 2017, Skagit County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) meeting, held at the Fidalgo Bay Resort in Anacortes (4701 Fidalgo Bay Rd, Anacortes)

Attendees:

- **MRC Members Attending:** Jay Lind, Paul Dinnel, Julie Barber, Nathan Biletnikoff, Todd Woodard, Jude Apple, Jamey Selleck, Betsy Stevenson, Morty Cohen, Tracy Alker
- **MRC Members Absent:** Matt Reynolds; Tim Manns, Sarah Tchang, Phyllis Bravinder
- **Others Attending:** Pete Haase (Morty's Alternate); Betty Carteret, Friends of Skagit Beaches; Wayne Huseby, Friends of Skagit Beaches; Rachel Price, Shell Refinery (Nate's Alternate); Jennifer Herron, Friends of Skagit Beaches

Call to Order and Introduction: Jamey Selleck called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. and opened the meeting with introductions.

Approval of Minutes: September 14, 2017, MRC meeting minutes were approved as written.

Public Comments:

- **Highway 20/Sharpe's Corner Project:** Morty Cohen requested that the MRC Chair follow-up with the Washington State Department of Transportation's (WSDOT) Highway 20/Sharpes Corner Roundabout Project Team and invite them to share information about their specific plans for managing the stormwater runoff. Tracy recently tried contacting WSDOT, but never got a response. Morty said that the project report is available, but difficult to understand. The public comment period for this project has ended and construction is expected to begin in the spring of 2018. Todd Woodard reminded everyone that there is currently nothing in place for managing stormwater, so this project will be a huge improvement because they will be implementing the latest best management practices for stormwater management. He also noted that results from water quality studies have shown that the water quality from stormwater runoff into Fidalgo Bay really isn't all that bad, to begin with.
 - **Action:** Wayne Huseby will send the contact information for the regional manager to Tracy.
- **Vessel Sewage No Discharge Zones:** Pete Haase shared that the Washington State's proposed new rule to make Puget Sound a No Discharge Zone is now accepting public comments through November 30th.
- **Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve Bird Study:** Pete Haase announced that the Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve (FBAR) Citizen Advisory Committee is looking for volunteers to participate in a monthly bird survey. The survey effort is being led by the Skagit Audubon Society to monitor the species and numbers of marine birds using Fidalgo Bay. The next survey will take place October 18th and will take two to three hours to complete. Volunteers are asked to meet at 2:00 pm at the March Point Park and Ride (8147 S. March Point Rd) in Anacortes on October 18th. Morty noted that you do not have to be an experienced birder to participate.

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

- **Atlantic Salmon Net Pen Incident:** A Representative from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) provided an update on the Atlantic salmon net pen incident to the NWSC. There are three state agencies that provide oversight to the commercial Atlantic salmon net pen operations at Cypress Island where the net pens recently failed: WDFW reviews permit requirements and compliance issues associated with the net pens and fish health; Department of Natural Resources (DNR) manages the aquatic lands at Cypress Island and leases part of it to Cooke Aquaculture for farming Atlantic salmon; and the Department of Ecology manages the water quality permits required for commercial net pen operations. WDFW, DNR, Ecology, the local tribes, and the owner are all working together to respond to the incident and to determine the exact cause of the net pen failure. The owner is responsible for removing the failed net pen structure and working to recover and account for the lost fish. Regular updates can be found on DNR's website: <https://www.dnr.wa.gov/atlanticsalmon>.
 - **Action:** Jay Lind forwarded a couple of articles regarding salmon net pens to the Skagit MRC members.
- **2017 MRC Conference:** MRC members are encouraged to attend the MRC Conference on November 3-4 in Bellingham. Registration closes on October 20. Contact Nicole at jordan@nwstraits.org if you have any questions. Pete Haase will be giving the "ignite presentation" on behalf of the Skagit MRC that will focus on the Salish Sea Stewards program. It is a five minute presentation where the slides automatically move forward every 15 seconds.

- Puget Sound Partnership (PSP) Update: The new PSP vital signs are ready: <http://www.psp.wa.gov/vitalsigns/>. Governor Inslee met with state and local leaders to discuss strategies and challenges in the effort to protect and improve the health of Puget Sound.
 - **Action**: The video stream can be viewed [here](#). Pete Haase reviewed it and shared his report with the MRC.
- NWSI Presentation to Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission: Rich and Caroline will be presenting on several high profile MRC projects and NWSI collaborations with WDFW at the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission's meeting.
- Next NWSC Meeting: The next Commission meeting will be December 8, 10:00a.m. - 12:00pm via WebEx.

Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) Report: Jay Lind

- NWSF Staff Update: Cathy Cameron, Chief Financial Officer, will be leaving the NWSF at the end of the month.
- MRC Opportunity Fund: The Request for Proposals for the MRC Opportunity Fund will likely be released sometime in November.
 - **Action**: MRC members are encouraged to start thinking about potential proposal ideas for this funding.

Administrative Report: Tracy Alker

- 2017 MRC Conference Travel Reimbursement: MRC members can get reimbursed for lodging and mileage for the MRC Conference. Please send Tracy your invoices. If a credit card is used, please provide a photocopy of the card with all of the numbers blacked out except for the last four.
- 2016-2017 MRC Grant: The grant recently expired September 30, 2017. All of the grant deliverables and invoices have been submitted and we are now in the process of closing out the grant. Tracy thanked MRC members for helping with the grant reports and for reporting volunteer hours. Over 4,758 volunteer hours were contributed by MRC members/alternates, and other volunteers towards MRC related tasks during this grant cycle (October 1, 2016 – September 30, 2017).
 - **Action**: Please contact Tracy if you would like to have a copy of any of the grant reports (i.e. Pinto Abalone Monitoring and Restoration, Fidalgo Bay Day, and Salish Sea Stewards).
- 2017-2018 MRC Grant: The MRC Grant Agreement will likely get signed by the County in the next two weeks. The grant start date will be October 1, 2017 – September 30, 2018.
 - **Action**: Tracy will work with the MRC Project Leads to get contracts drafted for the following projects: Pinto Abalone Recovery, Salish Sea Stewards, Kids on the Beach, and Bowman Bay Restoration Planting.
- Skagit MRC's Role as an Advisory Committee: The Committee discussed Skagit MRC's role as an advisory committee. According to the MRC Bylaws, decisions are made by consensus, including writing letters of support.
 - **Action**: Tracy will forward a copy of the MRC Bylaws to the Committee.

Project Status & Discussion

- Salish Sea Stewards: The Padilla Bay Foundation recently announced that they can no longer take on the responsibility of managing the Coastal Volunteer Partnership (CVP) program at Padilla Bay. The CVP is a collaboration of several funding partners to help support a full-time Volunteer Program Coordinator. The funding partners of the CVP include the Padilla Bay Foundation, the Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, Skagit County Marine Resources Committee, Skagit County Clean Water Program and the Friends of Skagit Beaches. The Padilla Bay Foundation took on the role of administering the CVP and hiring and managing the Volunteer Program Coordinator. Unfortunately, now that the Padilla Bay Foundation and Padilla Bay NERR can no longer provide administrative or financial support, the CVP program will be dissolved. The Volunteer Program Coordinator's position will officially come to an end on November 15, 2017. The County will need to contract with another organization or a qualified individual to manage the Salish Sea Stewards training and coordination. The Friends of Skagit Beaches is interested in partnering with the Skagit MRC to continue to support the Salish Sea Stewards volunteer program. A transition team consisting of MRC representatives, Salish Sea Steward volunteers, and Friends of Skagit Representatives will be working together to help with the program's transition process and to figure out the best path forward for the short and long-term. There is a Salish Sea Stewards transition team meeting scheduled take place on October 24th. A notice will go out in "The Wave" on Friday to let all of the volunteers know about the changes that will be taking place with the CVP. It will be important to continue to keep our volunteer base informed and engaged throughout this transition process.
- Bowman Bay Nearshore Restoration: No new updates. The next beach seining will take place October 17th at 12:00 pm.

- Tide Pool Sign at Washington Park: Around 30 surveys were completed by park visitors. We received a lot of positive feedback regarding the beautiful illustration and the informative messaging. Several people indicated they learned something after reading the sign. Many also commented that the sign wasn't in a very visible location.
- Fidalgo Bay Day: The final report has been completed and is available on the Skagit MRC website ([here](#)). Pete is waiting to hear back from the Shannon Point Marine Center's "Touch Tank" staff about possible dates for next year's event.
- Olympia Oyster Restoration: Field work is complete for the season. Paul is working on data entry and data analysis.
- Pinto Abalone Restoration: The final report has been completed and is available to be shared with MRC members who are interested.
- Forage Fish Index Site Surveys: Monthly surveys continue at Skagit MRC's three Forage Fish Index sites: Ship Harbor, Similk Bay on the Swinomish Reservation, and Samish Island.
- European Green Crab Monitoring: Monitoring is done for the season. Only two green crabs from the same cohort were found this year in Padilla Bay.
- Weaverling Spit Beach Nourishment/ Restoration: Construction is now complete! The boat ramp project will be happening sometime in January.
- Kayak Kelp Surveys: Kimberly Cauvel from the Skagit Valley Herald wrote an article about the kelp recovery project ([click here](#)). Lucas is working with Suzanne Shull to analyze kelp data to determine any trends.

Miscellaneous Events and Announcements:

- **Fidalgo Shoreline Academy- Saturday, October 21:** Friends of Skagit Beaches is sponsoring their 6th annual Fidalgo Shoreline Academy on Saturday, October 21, 2017, 9am-3:30 pm at the NW Education Services District Building in Anacortes (1601 R Ave). The keynote address is "The Effects of a Global Decline in Biodiversity" presented by Dr. Phoebe Barnard, Executive Director of the Pacific Biodiversity Institute. Free clock hours are available for teachers. The cost is just \$30 for the entire day of learning (\$40 with lunch)! Event proceeds are used to support the mission of Friends including public education and volunteer programs.
- **A Workshop on Southern Resident Killer Whale Protection, October 27:** San Juan County MRC is holding a workshop to identify and prioritize individual and local community actions and elicit personal commitments to help protect the Southern Resident Killer Whale from extinction. The workshop will be held Friday, October 27 from 1:30 pm to 4:30 pm at Friday Harbor. Space is limited. Register online through Eventbrite [here](#).

The meeting adjourned at 10:15 a.m. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, November 12, 2017, at the Skagit County Administration Building in Mount Vernon (1800 Continental Place)

(*The University of Washington research team interviewed MRC members following the regular MRC meeting. The group interview was part of their research to get a better understanding how science is used in decision-making within collaborative partnerships around the region)



SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the November 9, 2017, Skagit County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) meeting, held at the Skagit County Administration Building in Mount Vernon (1800 Continental Place)

Attendees:

- **MRC Members Attending:** Jay Lind, Nathan Biletnikoff, Jamey Selleck, Morty Cohen, Tracy Alker, Sarah Tchang, Phyllis Bravinder, Tim Manns
- **MRC Members Absent:** Matt Reynolds, Jude Apple, Paul Dinnel, Todd Woodard, Betsy Stevenson, Julie Barber
- **Others Attending:** Pete Haase (Morty's MRC Alternate); Gina Johnson, Salish Sea Steward; Richard Brocksmith, Skagit Watershed Council

Call to Order and Introduction: Jamey Selleck called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m. and opened the meeting with introductions.

Approval of Minutes: October 12, 2017, MRC meeting minutes were approved as written.

Public Comments: Nate reported that he recently attended the San Juan MRC's Orca Protection workshop that was held in San Juan County on October 27th. The workshop was hosted by San Juan MRC under the direction of the San Juan City Council as a "call to action" of different stakeholders to come together to explore what can be done at the local level to protect the southern resident orcas from extinction. The workshop focused on three different risk areas: 1) Prey availability of the Chinook salmon; 2) Contamination and pollution in the sound; 3) Vessel traffic, noise, and pollution. Nate said that it was a well-executed workshop, but three hours was not enough time to cover such a complex topic. The workshop was an excellent reminder of just how important it is to make sure all of the different stakeholder groups, particularly industry, are invited to the table to tackle some of these complex issues impacting the recovery of Puget Sound. [Click here](#) for a recent article about the workshop. MRC members discussed how the Skagit MRC could potentially get involved in orca protection. One suggestion was for Skagit MRC to host a workshop that primarily focuses on one area of risk specific to Skagit County such as: forage fish or stormwater pollution.

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

- **Terry Williams Retirement:** Terry Williams recently retired from the Commission. Terry was replaced by his alternate, Cecilia Gobin, with the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission. The Commission gave Terry special recognition at the MRC Conference dinner.
- **2017 MRC Conference Highlights:** The conference was well attended by Skagit MRC members. Some of the topics covered included ocean acidification, kelp recovery, effective communication, history of forage fish in the Salish Sea, marine renewable energy, vessel traffic impacts, and a biography of Jacques Cousteau. Pete Haase provided an excellent five-minute ignite presentation on the Salish Stewards and the Coastal Volunteer Partnership. Several Skagit MRC members commented that in addition to learning a few new things at the different sessions, it was a great opportunity to meet MRC members from other counties, and engage with other people they don't normally get to see very often. It was noted that there were fewer people at the conference this year compared to previous years and the energy level seemed a little lower than usual. Some felt that there was not enough time spent on what the MRCs are doing. It was also suggested that there needs to be better time management with some of the speakers and a little more time in between sessions to allow for networking with other conference attendees. Jamey reminded everyone who attended the conference to complete the survey. The feedback received will be used to help make improvements for next year's conference.
- **Kelp Recovery Plan:** NWSC received funding from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to help develop and implement the comprehensive Kelp Recovery Plan. Lucas will be leading this two-year project. A workshop will be held in April.
- **Next NWSC Meeting:** No meetings were held in October or November due to the MRC Conference. The next Commission meeting will be December 8, 10:00a.m. - 12:00pm via WebEx.

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

- Skagit Restoration Initiative (SRI) Funds: The remaining SRI budget is \$35,000. SRI funds can only be used for restoration and conservation projects in Fidalgo and Padilla Bays. The Skagit Land Trust (SLT) plans to submit a proposal for SRI funds to help support the Fidalgo Bay Shoreline Protection and Restoration project. They previously applied for the Estuary and Salmon Program (ESRP) grant for this project and ranked in the top quarter. However, it is unclear if or when SLT will receive the full award because the WA Department of Fish and Wildlife has delayed awarding the ESRP funds until the capital budget gets passed in Olympia. SLT's proposal will be evaluated by the SRI Subcommittee sometime after Thanksgiving. The SRI Subcommittee also hopes to set aside some SRI funding for continued monitoring at our MRC restoration sites. Jay asked the MRC for additional project ideas for the remaining SRI funds. Pete suggested they consider using the funds to apply additional beach sediment along the Tommy Thompson Trail to enhance forage fish spawning habitat and address sea level rise. Nate said that depending on what the status is, the former Whitmarsh Landfill cleanup project could also be another potential restoration and monitoring project to consider in the future.
- MRC Opportunity Fund: The Foundation raised around \$6,000 at the MRC Conference Silent Auction that will be matched by a private donor for the MRC Opportunity Fund. The total MRC Opportunity Fund balance is now around \$70,000. Each MRC will get a chance to apply for up to \$10,000 for projects that emphasize citizen science and community engagement. The Request for Proposals for the MRC Opportunity Fund will likely be released sometime soon.
 - **Action:** MRC members are encouraged to start thinking about potential proposal ideas for this funding.

Administrative Report: Tracy Alker

- 2017 MRC Conference Travel Reimbursement: MRC members can get reimbursed for lodging and mileage for the MRC Conference. Please send Tracy your invoices. If a credit card is used, please provide a photocopy of the card with all of the numbers blacked out except for the last four.
- 2017-2018 MRC Grant: The MRC Grant Agreement has been signed and copies were sent to MRC members. The grant is just for one year starting October 1, 2017, through September 30, 2018.
 - **Action:** Tracy is working with the MRC Project Leads to get contracts drafted for the following projects: Pinto Abalone Recovery, Salish Sea Stewards, Kids on the Beach, and Bowman Bay Restoration Planting.

2018 - 2022 Puget Sound Partnership's (PSP) Near Term Action Agenda (NTA) Proposals: Jamey Selleck

The process for updating the 2018 -2022 Puget Sound Partnership Action Agenda will be underway soon including a solicitation for Near-Term Actions for achieving Puget Sound recovery targets over the next four years. **Pre-registration of near-term actions is required by December 22, 2017.** The deadline to submit the final NTA Fact Sheet is **March 30, 2018.** This opportunity to submit proposals for NTAs won't happen again for four years. The relevant links can be found [here](#). All NTAs must address one of the three [Strategic Initiatives](#) established by the PSP to help prioritize near-term recovery efforts and funding: 1) Prevent pollution from stormwater; 2) Protect and restore habitat; and 3) Recover shellfish beds. Because Skagit County does not currently have a Local Integrating Organization (LIO) to facilitate this process, Skagit MRC would need to go through a regional sponsor such as the Northwest Straits Commission or the Northwest Straits Foundation. Jamey clarified that the Puget Sound Partnership's (PSP) Near Term Action (NTA) Agenda is not exactly a grant funding opportunity and applying for an NTA doesn't guarantee funding. A project can be ranked as a high priority and get absolutely no funding for it. The NTAs provide a way for the PSP to share the highly ranked project priorities with the state legislators and the US Environmental Protection Agency, etc. to try to bring money to the Puget Sound region. Richard Brocksmith said that the Skagit Watershed Council will be reviewing NTA proposals submitted by different organizations in Skagit County in order to try to get a better understanding of the priority projects happening in our area. They will be looking for partnership opportunities and will provide letters of support to the projects that help their mission in salmon recovery. Richard said he would be happy to share NTA project proposal information with the Skagit MRC, if interested.

Project Status & Discussion

- Salish Sea Stewards: The Padilla Bay Foundation recently announced that they can no longer take on the administrative responsibility of the Coastal Volunteer Partnership (CVP) program at Padilla Bay. Without the administrative or financial support of Padilla Bay, the CVP program will essentially be dissolved. The CVP was a collaboration of several funding partners to help support a full-time Volunteer Program Coordinator. Samantha's position as the Volunteer Program Coordinator for the CVP officially ended on November 15th. The funding partners of the CVP included the Padilla Bay Foundation, the Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, Skagit County Marine Resources Committee, Skagit County Clean Water Program and the Friends of Skagit Beaches. The Friends of

Skagit Beaches has expressed interest in partnering with the Skagit MRC to help continue the Salish Sea Stewards program and can provide some additional funding to help support it.

A Salish Sea Stewards Program Transition Team has been established to help the transition process run smoothly. The nine-member Transition Team consists of representatives from the Skagit MRC, Salish Sea Steward volunteers, and Friends of Skagit Beaches. The Team is working on a short-term and long-term plan for moving the volunteer program forward while continuing to keep the current volunteer base informed and engaged. Morty said that he was really impressed with how the Team has pulled together to share the workload such as: going through all of the electronic files, maintaining the CVP website, maintaining the CVP Facebook page, maintaining the Volgistics database, sending updates to the volunteers through the electronic news bulletin, "The Wave", and updating the inventory of supplies and equipment.

Members of the Transition Team also met with several different non-profit organizations and agencies that utilize volunteers to discuss whether or not a partnership with one of them might be a good fit for the Salish Sea Stewards program including the Skagit Conservation District, the Skagit Watershed Group, the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group, WA Sea Grant, RE-Sources for Sustainable Communities, Island County Sound Water Stewards, the Northwest Straits Commission, and the Whatcom MRC. The Whatcom MRC is interested in exploring the possibility of partnering with Skagit MRC to support a volunteer program in some capacity. Morty and Pete will be participating in a conference call with the Whatcom MRC next Monday. For the short term, the Transition Team is considering contracting with a company or individual to facilitate the volunteer training and coordination in 2018. 19 people have already signed up to take the training. Morty suggested the MRC consider charging a small fee for the class to cover costs for purchasing supplies, etc. Charging a fee might also be a way to help get a stronger commitment from the volunteers.

The Coastal Volunteer Partnership and Salish Sea Steward volunteers will be hosting a year-end celebratory potluck in honor of Samantha Russell next Thursday, November 16th from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Fidalgo Bay Resort in Anacortes. The potluck will also be an opportunity to hear about the wonderful work the volunteers have been doing this year, some of the changes happening with the volunteer program and plans for 2018. The announcement will be going out in "The Wave" tomorrow.

- Bowman Bay Nearshore Restoration: Surf smelt eggs were found at the Bowman Bay restoration site.
- Fidalgo Bay Day: Pete is still waiting to hear back from the Shannon Point Marine Center's "Touch Tank" staff about their availability for next year's event. There are only a few dates in August that will be good for beach seining.
- Olympia Oyster Restoration: No updates.
- Pinto Abalone Restoration: No updates.
- Forage Fish Index Site Surveys: Monthly surveys continue at Skagit MRC's three Forage Fish Index sites: Ship Harbor, Similk Bay on the Swinomish Reservation, and Samish Island.
- European Green Crab Monitoring: No updates.
- Weaverling Spit Beach Nourishment/ Restoration: No updates.
- Kayak Kelp Surveys: No updates.

Miscellaneous Events and Announcements:

- The Samish Indian Nation recently moved their offices to a new location along Highway 20.
- The Coastal Volunteer Partnership and Salish Sea Stewards year-end meeting and potluck celebration will be held in honor of Samantha Russell on November 16th from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Fidalgo Bay Resort in Anacortes.

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, December 14, 2017, at the Port of Anacortes



SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the December 14, 2017, Skagit County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) meeting, held at the Port of Anacortes (100 Commercial Ave)

Attendees:

- **MRC Members Attending:** Jay Lind, Jude Apple, Paul Dinnel, Todd Woodard, Betsy Stevenson, Julie Barber, Jamey Selleck, Morty Cohen, Tracy Alker, Sarah Tchang, Phyllis Bravinder, Tim Manns
- **MRC Members Absent:** Matt Reynolds, Nathan Biletnikoff
- **Others Attending:** Pete Haase (Morty's MRC Alternate); Gina Johnson, Salish Sea Steward; Jay Krienite, WDFW; Jenna Friebel, WDFW; Charlette Turman, SCPW; Sara Holohan, Citizen; Seth Ballhorn, WDFW; Jenny Baker, TNC; Lucas Hart, NWSC

Call to Order and Introduction: Jamey Selleck called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m. and opened the meeting with introductions.

Approval of Minutes: November 9, 2017, MRC meeting minutes were approved as written.

Public Comments: No public comments.

Farm, Fish, Flood Initiative (3FI) Alternatives Analysis: Jenna Friebel, WDFW and Jenny Baker, TNC

The Farms, Fish and Floods Initiative (3FI) was established in 2011 as a collaborative effort of agricultural and conservation interest groups and government agencies that aim to identify actions and prioritize projects that support the 3FI mission "To create and advance mutually beneficial strategies that support the long-term viability of agriculture and salmon while reducing the risks of destructive floods." The co-leads that initiated this effort are the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), The Nature Conservancy, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Habitat Conservation/Restoration Center. The other participants in the working group include: Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland, Western Washington Agricultural Association, Skagit Conservation District, Skagit County, and Skagit County Dike District #17. The working group meets monthly to talk about issues and concerns and identify actions. They came up with the idea to develop a landscape-scale alternatives analysis using hydrodynamic modeling to help measure the benefits and potential negative impacts of a wide range of projects in the Skagit Delta that vary in size and type. Many of the projects included in the Alternatives Analysis came from the Chinook Recovery Plan and some of them came from the [Skagit River Flood General Flood Investigation](#) study, and a few were identified during the working group discussions. The Alternatives Analysis was a five year process that included a lot of public outreach and input from the 3FI interest groups and stakeholders. As a result, a small suite of projects were identified as having moderate benefits and low impacts and support of the 3FI interest groups. The Phase 2 final report "An Alternatives Analysis of Restoration Project Concepts along Farm, Fish and Flood Interests: Skagit Hydrodynamic Model Project" can be found at this link: <https://tnc.box.com/s/lsln2br8f1hejgrlziep9tqeowsscc5p>. For the next five years, the focus will be on engaging key stakeholder groups and ensuring the benefits of the projects being advanced will be maximized across multi-interest groups and identifying ways to address and offset any remaining impacts. Jay Krienitz with WDFW offered to come back in February or March to talk to the MRC about the Estuary and Salmon restoration Program (ESRP) small grants program and other funding opportunities the MRC might be interested in.

Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Report: Jamey Selleck

- **Puget Sound Nutrient Source Reduction Plan:** The last NWSC meeting was a WebEx meeting. Dustin Bilhimer presented on the Department of Ecology's Puget Sound Nutrient Source Reduction Plan to improve Puget Sound water quality. More information can be found on their website: http://www.ecy.wa.gov/puget_sound/reducing-nutrients.html.
- **Northwest Straits Commission and Foundation Joint Retreat:** March 1-2, 2018 at Padilla Bay.
- **Puget Sound Partnership (PSP) EPA Alternate:** Karin Berkholtz was appointed as Sheida Sahandy's alternate and PSP EPA liaison to the NWSC.
- **2017 MRC Conference Survey and Presentations:** Survey results for the 2017 MRC conference were very positive Visit the NWSC website to view or download the presentations: <http://www.nwstraits.org/2017-mrc-conference/>.

- 2018 MRC Conference: The next MRC Conference is scheduled for November 16-17, 2018 at Fort Warden in Port Townsend. Contact Sasha if you would like to help plan the conference (horst@nwstraits.org).
- 20th Anniversary Celebration: 2018 is the 20th year anniversary of the Northwest Straits Initiative. MRC members interested in participating in the planning committee to celebrate this milestone year and develop ideas for showcasing our work can contact Sasha to participate or submit ideas to horst@nwstraits.org.
- Orca Emergency Task Force: Governor Inslee plans to form an Orca Emergency Task Force to prevent the extinction of Chinook salmon and the Southern Resident orcas. The Director of the Puget Sound Partnership, Sheida Sahandy, is currently involved and would like the Northwest Straits Commission to get involved as well.
- MRC Monthly Reports: Monthly reports for each MRC are available by visiting this link: <http://bit.ly/2iFqZR9>.
- Next NWSC Meeting: The next Commission meeting will be held January 26, 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. at the Snohomish County Campus in the Skykomish Conference Room.

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

- Skagit Restoration Initiative (SRI) Funds: The remaining SRI budget is \$35,000 for restoration and conservation projects in Fidalgo and Padilla Bays. The SRI Subcommittee will be meeting next Tuesday to evaluate the Skagit Land Trust's (SLT) proposal for some of the SRI funds to be used to help support a water quality study as part of the Fidalgo Bay Shoreline Protection and Restoration project. They previously applied for the Estuary and Salmon Program (ESRP) grant for this project and ranked in the top quarter. However, it is unclear if or when SLT will receive the full award because the WA Department of Fish and Wildlife has delayed awarding the ESRP funds until the capital budget gets passed in Olympia. The SRI funds are administered through the Northwest Straits Foundation under the guidance of the Skagit MRC subcommittee.
- Grant Award: The NWSF received a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) to boost the protection and recovery of Chinook salmon that are key prey for killer whales in this region. Each County MRC will likely be involved in this project.
- New Director of Philanthropy: The NWSF hired a new Director of Philanthropy, Tarrell Kullaway, who starts in January.
- Near Term Actions (NTA) Proposals: The NWSF is submitting several NTAs which will include some involvement of each of the MRCs. They are submitting two regional NTA proposals including Shoreline Armor Reduction and Prevention Program and Shoreline Restoration Effectiveness Monitoring. They are also submitting four local NTAs including the Similk Bay Shoreline Armor Removal project in Skagit County.

Eelgrass Monitoring: *Lucas Hart, NWSC*

Lucas said that several MRCs have expressed interest in getting involved in eelgrass monitoring using citizen scientists. It is still unclear whether or not it is feasible for eelgrass monitoring to become a regional project for the MRCs or what that might even look like. It might be different for each MRC. In addition, one of the questions that would need to be answered is who would manage all of the data. The NWSC does not currently have the staff capacity to do this. Lucas recently started looking into different monitoring protocol options for eelgrass that wouldn't require a boat, airplane, sonar, or other expensive equipment to help make it easier for the MRCs to get involved. Below are two different monitoring protocol options that he found so far:

1. One option is SeagrassNet (www.seagrassnet.org) a monitoring program that utilizes a global monitoring protocol to investigate and document the status of seagrasses world-wide and is available online: www.seagrassnet.org. All of the data is entered into a web-based data reporting system that anybody can access to compare status and trends of seagrasses in different parts of the world. SeagrassNet monitoring protocols are pretty intensive but not cost prohibitive. It involves transects, quadrats, and collecting core samples for biomass and carbon content. The Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) uses the SeagrassNet monitoring protocol and has indicated that they could help process additional samples for the MRCs if interested.
2. A second option is the eelgrass wasting disease monitoring protocol developed by Morgan Eisenlord which would be amendable for volunteers to use. Morgan is also interested in adding her program to the SeagrassNet protocol.
3. A third option is a program called Seagrass Watch. Seagrass Watch (www.seagrasswatch.org) is also a global seagrass monitoring program designed for school groups and volunteers to implement. The monitoring protocols are less intensive than the SeagrassNet protocols. The monitoring manual and datasheets can be downloaded from their website: http://www.seagrasswatch.org/home_noG.html.

In order to determine what protocols to follow, the Skagit MRC will need to decide what our priorities are. Is community engagement a priority? Are there any pressing questions about eelgrass that we want answered? Are there any eelgrass beds that we can monitor that can be easily accessed by volunteers? Julie suggested that if there is strong interest from

multiple MRCs to get involved, then all of the MRCs should try to use the same monitoring protocols for consistency. Todd recommended the MRCs follow the SeagrassNet monitoring protocols since that is what DNR, the Samish Indian Nation, and Padilla Bay NERR are using for consistency and comparable data. Jude pointed out that there are some consistencies between the different methods because they are all quadrat based assessment of eelgrass density and biomass so they could be linked together by identifying universal metrics. Lucas suggested that we continue the conversation to determine if eelgrass monitoring is something the Skagit MRC wants to be involved in.

Project Status & Discussion

- **Salish Sea Stewards:** We are currently in the process of seeking a firm or an individual contractor to administer the Salish Sea Stewards training program and volunteer coordination this year. A Request for Quotes and Qualifications was widely distributed. Unfortunately, the only proposal that was received failed to provide the additional information needed to meet the requirements of the contract. We will likely need to start looking at other options.
- **Bowman Bay Nearshore Restoration:** The next beach seining at Bowman Bay is scheduled to take place Friday, December 22nd at 2:30 pm. We will likely have another planting sometime this spring.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** The dates in August didn't pan out for Fidalgo Bay Day this year, so the event date has been changed to September 15th. Unfortunately, the Skagit River Salmon Festival will be held the Saturday before, so hopefully it won't be too difficult to get some organizations to host displays and activities two weekends in a row. The Fidalgo Bay Resort facility has been reserved and the Shannon Point Marine Center's touch tank will be available for our event this year. The tides will also work out well for the beach seining demonstration. Save the date cards will be distributed soon.
- **Kids on the Beach Pilot Project:** We are currently in the process of seeking a firm or an individual contractor to administer the Kids on the Beach Pilot Project this year. A Request for Quotes and Qualifications was widely distributed. We received one proposal yesterday that will be reviewed and evaluated next week.
- **Olympia Oyster Restoration:** Paul finished up the data entry and analysis of the oyster data collected in 2017. Paul discovered that last year's native oyster population in Fidalgo Bay is actually closer to 3.1 million, not 4.8 million as originally estimated. The native oysters are doing really well and the population keeps increasing each year. There is a very high density of native oysters in the shell plots. Puget Sound Restoration Fund has funding to distribute more oyster shell plots in 2018. Paul is working with Brady Blake from WDFW to transfer some native oysters from Fidalgo Bay over to the east side of Marches Point along the shorelines of Padilla Bay. There is a new coast-wide initiative from California all the way up to Washington to start expanding and coordinating native oyster restoration efforts. Jude Apple would be the lead coordinator for our area and Paul Dinnel would play a supporting role. As part of that effort they will start looking at the possibility of adding native oyster seed in Padilla Bay.
- **Pinto Abalone Restoration:** No updates. The sub-award agreement with the Puget Sound Restoration Fund will be signed soon. Monitoring will start up again later this winter. It is anticipated that an additional 1,000 juvenile pinto abalone will be outplanted at the six restoration sites in Skagit County in 2018. There is some concern that the proposed pink scallop harvest area near Burrows Island could potentially impact pinto abalone recovery due to poaching.
- **Forage Fish Index Site Surveys:** Monthly surveys continue at Skagit MRC's three Forage Fish Index sites: Ship Harbor, Similk Bay on the Swinomish Reservation, and Samish Island. Surf smelt eggs have been detected at all three of our sites this year. The samples and data are sent to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife for analysis.
- **Kayak Kelp Surveys:** It is anticipated that the surveys will start up again this summer. Lucas is planning a kelp recovery plan team workshop on March 20 in Seattle. Suzanne Shull is starting to compile the MRC data that has been collected. Lucas is working with the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to develop a publication that shows the status and trends of bull kelp using MRC and DNR data. Lucas has also been collaborating with folks from British Columbia to share and compare bull kelp data. Jamey is working with the Puget Sound Restoration Fund (PSRF) on kelp recovery work. The 60 Minutes show on CBS was recently on site with PSRF to do a news segment on kelp research and mariculture.

MRC Membership Applicants: *Jamey Selleck*

- **Pete Haase:** Pete is currently serving on the MRC as Morty Cohen's alternate. Pete is also the Project Lead for two MRC projects (ie Fidalgo Bay Day and Kids on the Beach) so it made more sense for him to apply to become a full-time MRC member rather than continue to serve as an alternate. The Committee voted unanimously to approve Pete's application. Per consensus, the MRC will make the recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to appoint Pete Haase to the MRC. Morty announced that he would like to appoint Rachel Best to replace Pete as his new alternate.

- Lynne Jordan: The Skagit Land Trust recommended that Lynne Jordan be appointed to replace Kit Rawson on the MRC as the new Skagit Land Trust representative and Kari Odden would replace Tim Manns as Lynne's alternate. The Committee voted unanimously to approve Lynne's application. Per consensus, the MRC will make the recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to appoint Lynne to the MRC.

Miscellaneous Events and Announcements:

- MRC Officer Elections: A new MRC Chair and Vice-Chair will be elected at the MRC meeting in January. Please contact Jamey if you are interested or would like to nominate someone.
- 2018 National Shellfish Association Conference: March 18-22, 2018 in Seattle WA. For more information. <http://www.shellfish.org/annual-meeting>:

The meeting adjourned at 11:05 a.m. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, January 11, 2017, at the Skagit County Administration Building in Mount Vernon (1800 Continental Place)