



# SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the January 11, 2018, 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, Betsy Stevenson, Julie Barber, Jamey Selleck, Morty Cohen, Tracy Alker, Sarah Tchang, Phyllis Bravinder, Nathan Biletnikoff, Suzanne Shull (Jude Apple's alternate); Pete Haase; Lynne Jordon
- **MRC Members Absent:** Matt Reynolds, Todd Woodard, Jude Apple
- **Others Attending:** Rachel Best (Morty's MRC Alternate); Michael See, SCPW; Doug Stark, Whatcom MRC; Shane Sullivan, WSDOT; Gabe Ng, WSDOT; Chad Calhoun, WSDOT; Erica Bleke, WDNR; Jack Hartt, Citizen

**Call to Order and Introduction:** Jamey Selleck called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and opened the meeting with introductions. Jamey announced that Amy Carey's Sound Action presentation was canceled due to another scheduling conflict. We are working with Amy to try to reschedule the presentation for another time.

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

## Public Comments:

- Whatcom MRC member Doug Stark, provided a brief summary of the work that Whatcom MRC is doing including: working with Paul Dinnel to help re-establish native oyster beds in Chuckanut Bay, working to establish a volunteer program similar to the Salish Sea Stewards, working with school groups to help with projects on the beach, and participating in some of the pre-restoration monitoring at the Lummi Island rock quarry.
- Michael See suggested the MRC consider presenting to the Board of County Commissioners sometime soon to get them up to speed on the important work the MRC is doing.

## Sharpes Corner Project Update: *WSDOT Engineering Design Team*

### Project Goals:

- The Washington State Department of Transportation's (WSDOT) Sharpes Corner roundabout project aims to increase safety and decrease congestion. For more information:  
<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/SR20/SharpesCornerInterchange/default.htm>.

### Project Timeline:

- WSDOT has a contract with Tapani Inc. to do the construction which is scheduled to start in April, 2018. Construction will occur 24 hours (days and nights) in order to get it complete before the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday.
- The utility companies will begin the utility relocations at the intersection sometime next week.
- The next open house is scheduled in Anacortes on January 23.

### Environmental Impacts:

- This project will provide stormwater treatments where there currently are none, so the pollutant load to Fidalgo Bay will be less than existing conditions.
- The WSDOT Design Team said that their project design exceeds the requirements of the [Hydraulics Manual](#) guidelines and the [Highway Runoff Manual](#) (HRM) to treat stormwater runoff. Their Best Management Practices (BMPs) will treat about 3.5 times the area that they are required to treat.
- The roundabout will also help reduce stormwater pollutants because the traffic will no longer be sitting there idling and releasing heavy metals like it currently does with the traffic light.
- There will be very limited earth moving work.
- The project will not alter the existing drainage patterns.
- Inspectors will be onsite every step of the way during construction to make sure the work is being done properly and the permit requirements are being met.

### Best Management Practices:

- The Compost Amended Vegetated Filter Strip (CAVFS) is an enhanced BMP that will be used throughout this project. The carefully blended compost medium increases the storage time and filtration characteristics for removing pollutants. The CAVFS provide a more concentrated treatment in a smaller footprint than some other BMPs. Test results show that CAVFS filter 91% of the pollutants from stormwater during a very heavy rain event. During a light rain event they would likely remove 100% of the pollutants. The lifespan of the CAVFS ranges from approximately 20-50 years (longer than the asphalt).
- In addition to the CAVFS, they will also have landscaping and planting areas that will continue to increase the treatment beyond the CAVFS.
- The CAVFS and landscaping will be maintained by WSDOT's Maintenance Department as part of their agreement with Ecology.

**Monitoring:**

- The WSDOT Design Team said that monitoring will occur during construction, but there are no plans to do any long-term monitoring. They pointed out that the BMPs have already been researched, tested, and vetted and approved by the WA Department of Ecology so they are confident that they will work properly. After MRC members expressed concern over the lack of long-term monitoring, WSDOT agreed to take the MRC's questions and concerns about monitoring back to WSDOT's Environmental Manager.
- Paul suggested that oysters might be a good option for testing for pollutants before and after construction to see how well the CAVFS are working. It would be similar to the WA Department of Fish and Wildlife's (WDFW's) Mussel Watch program. Paul noted that the native oysters appear to be doing quite well in that area of Fidalgo Bay which likely indicates the water quality probably isn't too bad right now. Morty recommended contacting WA Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) to see if they could conduct a water quality study as part of their Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve program. Erin said she would follow up with WDNR.

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

- Rich Childers Resignation: Rich Childers recently announced his resignation as the Director of the Northwest Straits Commission, effective January 15. The NWSC is moving forward to find a new Director. Terry Stevens put together the job posting and submitted it to the Department of Ecology. Jamey will be serving on the Election Committee, which is one of the reasons why he will not be able to serve a second term as MRC Chair. The hiring process will likely take a couple of months.
- Northwest Straits Commission and Northwest Straits Foundation Joint Retreat: March 1-2, 2018 at Padilla Bay. The major topic will be strategic planning.
- Salmon Net Pen Educational Forum: The discussion about a net pen educational forum has been shelved for now.
- NWSI 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary: 2018 is the 20th year anniversary of the Northwest Straits Initiative. Please contact Sasha to share ideas to celebrate and showcase our work.
- Next NWSC Meeting: The next Commission meeting will be held Friday, 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*

- New Director of Philanthropy: The NWSF hired a new Director of Philanthropy, Tarrell Kullaway, who just started this month.
- Skagit Restoration Initiative (SRI) Funds: The SRI funds are administered through the Northwest Straits Foundation under the guidance of the Skagit MRC subcommittee. The SRI Subcommittee recently met to decide what to do with the remaining SRI fund balance of approximately \$29,000. The original SRI budget was \$500,000 which we were able to stretch by implementing a 1:1 match. So in the end, we will have achieved close to a million dollars-worth of work. The Subcommittee made the recommendation to the NWSF Board to spend the remaining SRI funds on the following projects, which the Board approved:
  - **Water Quality Testing:** \$10,000 will be awarded to Skagit Land Trust to help support a water quality study in the streams at the Carlsen/Graber property that flow into Fidalgo Bay as part of the larger Fidalgo Bay Shoreline Protection and Restoration project. The house at the site has already been removed.
  - **Nearshore Monitoring:** \$12,000 will be used to support the continued long-term nearshore restoration and status/trends monitoring in Fidalgo Bay (including data analysis, final monitoring report, and inclusion of data in Sound IQ).
  - **Native Oyster Restoration:** \$5,000 will be allotted for native oyster restoration in Fidalgo and Padilla Bays.
 The remaining funds will be used to cover administrative costs.

- **NFWF 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. The Foundation will be hiring three interns to help with this project. Each County MRC will also likely be involved in this project. Nate announced that Shell Puget Sound Refinery is also contributing funding for the NFWF Five Star & Urban Waters Restoration Program. The [2018 Request for Proposals](#) was recently released. Proposals are due January 31, 2018. Awards range from \$20k to \$50k.
- **Next NWSF Board Meeting:** February 15, 2018.

### MRC Officer Elections

- **MRC Chair:** MRC members voted unanimously in favor of electing Paul Dinnel to serve as Chair for at least one term. There were no objections.
- **MRC Vice-Chair:** MRC members voted unanimously in favor of electing Sarah Tchang to serve as Vice-Chair for a second term. There were no objections.
- **NWSC Representative:** MRC members voted unanimously in favor of electing Jamey Selleck to serve another term as the NWSC Representative for the Skagit MRC. There were no objections.
- **NWSC Alternate:** MRC members voted unanimously in favor of electing Nate Biletnikoff to serve another term as the NWSC Alternate. There were no objections.

### Project Status & Discussion

- **Salish Sea Stewards- *Morty Cohen:***
  - **Volunteer Program Coordinator/Contractor Status:** We are currently in the process of seeking a firm or an individual contractor to administer the Salish Sea Stewards training and coordination this year. A Request for Quotes and Qualifications (RFQQ) was sent to all of the Environmental Education and Outreach Consultants registered on the County's MRSC Roster. We also sent it to several other individuals and firms that have experience doing this type of work. It was also posted on the Skagit MRC website the CVP website and Facebook page and the Friends of Skagit Beaches website. Due to the lack of response, we ended up reposting the RFQQ and extending the deadline until next Tuesday. Morty asked MRC members to please widely share the RFQQ with anyone who might be interested. Tracy noted that one of the contracting requirements with the County is that the firm or individual must have a business license and insurance. The nine member Salish Sea Stewards subcommittee has been tasked with evaluating/ranking the proposals and selecting the contractor. The Subcommittee consists of six MRC members (Tracy, Morty, Phyllis, Pete, Jay and Rachel) and three Friends of Skagit Beaches Board members (Betty Carteret, Jen Heron, and Gina). If no proposals are received by the deadline, the subcommittee members will have to start looking at other options, including the possibility of having volunteers run the training program this year.
  - **2018 Training Schedule/Planning:** It is anticipated that training will begin March 20<sup>th</sup> rather than March 6<sup>th</sup> as originally planned. We hope to firm up some dates next week. Classes will be held Tuesdays from 1:00pm to 5:00pm at Padilla Bay. The facility has already been reserved. We will start contacting speakers soon. Several MRC members will be asked to be presenters. There are already 26 people on the list to receive an application for this year's training. No decisions have been made yet regarding a cap on the class size.
  - **Volunteer Communications:** Subcommittee members are keeping the current roster of volunteers informed through the electronic news bulletin "The Wave". To get information posted on "The Wave", send an email to: [Salishseastewards@gmail.com](mailto:Salishseastewards@gmail.com). The Project Leaders are also maintaining regular contact with the volunteers that are helping with specific projects like beach seining and forage fish surveys. However, there is a gap with the overall volunteer coordination.
  - **Long-term Planning:** We are currently seeking partners to help support a long-term program and share resources to hire a Volunteer Program Coordinator. The Subcommittee has already met with several potential partner organizations, but nobody is able to hire a Volunteer Program Coordinator at this time.
- **Bowman Bay Nearshore Restoration- *Jay Lind:*** Jay reported that the site is really starting to take shape. The dune grass appears to be taking hold and is looking really good. The next beach seining at Bowman Bay is scheduled to take place Friday, January 24th. We will be contracting with the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group to continue plant maintenance and possibly have another planting sometime this spring.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day- *Pete Haase:*** We could not get the August 8<sup>th</sup> date that we really wanted for Fidalgo Bay Day this year, so the event date has been changed to September 15<sup>th</sup>. Pete distributed Save the Date cards to MRC members and will be distributing them at the Storming the Sound event in La Conner. 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. Pete contacted all of the leads that play key roles. He will also be reaching out to MRC members for help as well.

- Kids on the Beach Pilot Project- *Pete Haase*: Mira Lutz with One Ocean Environmental was the contractor selected to develop and implement the Kids on the Beach pilot project. We are working on getting a contract agreement in place.
- Olympia Oyster Restoration- *Paul Dinnel*: Monitoring will begin again in April. Paul recently participated in a native oyster restoration planning workshop that took place at the Shannon Point Marine center. Paul will also be providing a seminar on Olympia oyster restoration for the students at the Shannon Point Marine Center next week.
- Pinto Abalone Recovery- *Paul Dinnel*: The San Juan County MRC is now a partner in the pinto abalone recovery effort. Paul will be participating in an all-day pinto abalone recovery planning meeting down at the Manchester Lab next month. Monitoring will start up again in February. It is anticipated that an additional 1,000 juvenile pinto abalone will be outplanted at the restoration sites in Skagit County in 2018.
- Forage Fish Index Site Surveys- *Pete Haase*: 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. The WA Department of Natural Resources will be hosting a Microscopic Analysis Training at Padilla Bay later this month for the Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve volunteers. If there is enough space, volunteers involved in the forage fish index site surveys will be able to participate in the training as well.
- Kayak Kelp Recovery- *Suzanne Shull*: Suzanne Shull has been compiling the kelp survey data collected from all of the MRC survey site locations and placing it into maps. The online maps are also linked to 1870's T-sheet kelp delineations: <https://arcgis/OPOmCC>. Here is the link to the online map of Skagit surveys: <https://arcgis/8TObG>. Suzanne is also preparing a presentation on the NWS kelp survey data for the upcoming Salish Sea EcoSystem Conference this year. Nicole Jordan will be hosting the NWSI poster highlighting the kelp surveys at the upcoming Sound Waters University event in Island County in February [www.soundwaterstewards.org/sw/2018/](http://www.soundwaterstewards.org/sw/2018/). Suzanne is working with Helen Berry to put all of the data and information collected so far into one place. Helen and Tom Mumford recently published a paper on kelp in Puget Sound using WWI era maps in partnership with University of Chicago's Cathy Pfister: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1365-2745.12908/full>. Here is a link to a recent article <https://news.uchicago.edu/article/2017/12/21/world-war-i-era-maps-help-track-history-kelp-forests-pacific-northwest>.

#### Miscellaneous Events and Announcements:

- WSDOT Sharpes Corner Project: Open House- January 23, 5:30pm to 7:30pm at the Anacortes Middle School (2202 M. Avenue, Anacortes).

**The meeting adjourned at 11:07 a.m. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, February 8, 2018, at the Fidalgo Bay Resort (4701 Fidalgo Bay Rd, Anacortes)**