

# Skagit County Marine Resources Committee

Minutes of the January 10, 2013 meeting held at the Mount Vernon Senior Center

**Members Attending:** Tracy Alker, Erica Pickett, Rachel Benbrook, Jay Lind, Ivar Dolph, Paul Dinnel, Jim Ramaglia, Teri Switalski, Julie Barber, Kari Odden, Kristin Rine

**Members Absent:** Scott Schuyler, Christine Woodward, Lori Kyle, Betsy Stevenson, Charles O'Hara

**Others Attending:** Joan Drinkwin, Northwest Straits Foundation; Don McMoran, WSU Skagit Ext.

**Call to Order and Introductions:** Rachel Benbrook began the meeting at 9:10 a.m.

**Minutes:** Approved

**Public Comments:** None

## **Northwest Straits Commission/Foundation Report:**

- There was no NWSC meeting in December. However, there was an Executive Committee meeting. They primarily discussed funding issues. The next meeting will be held January 25 in Bellingham. MRC members are always encouraged to attend. The Strategic Planning retreat will be held in March at Padilla Bay.

## **Administrative Report:**

- **Volunteer Hours:** MRC grant semi-annual report and progress reports are due January 15, 2012. Please send project photos and volunteer hours on all MRC related tasks (e.g. preparing project reports, grant preparation, training, attending meetings and workshops, oyster restoration, forage fish surveys, etc.) to Tracy as soon as possible. Tracy e-mailed volunteer hour report forms to help track hours.
- **MRC Website:** Tracy sent out a Request for Quotes to four different website companies. Only one website design firm responded, Mindfly Inc. Mindfly designed the websites for the Northwest Straits Initiative and some of the other MRCs. We hope to have a contract in place by February. Rachel suggested providing a listserve on the website for those who are interested in being notified about special events. Volunteers are needed to help with website design development, gathering information, and photos. Tracy also requested that each MRC member develop a short bio to include on the new website.
- **Grant Funding Flexibility:** MRC grant funding was originally supposed to be strictly for MRC operations. However, Sasha recently announced that there is now some flexibility with the MRC grant and we can use some of the funding towards small projects. Two projects were identified as possibilities:
  - Community Beach Seining (June & Aug) ~\$600
  - Car Wash Kits Promotion ~\$2,500

Because the grant is paying for staff time, it frees up some County funds for these small projects so a grant amendment won't be necessary.

- **Election of MRC Officers:** The election was postponed until March. Rachel Benbrook expressed interest in continuing as the NWSC representative for one more year. MRC Chair Lori Kyle and Vice-Chair, Christine Woodward, have already served the two year maximum, so we will need to seek nominations for a new Chair and Vice-Chair.
- **Nearshore, Landowner Workshop - Planning Meeting:** (Jan 11, 2013 at Padilla Bay) Rachel Benbrook, Erica Pickett, and Paul Dinnel volunteered to attend the Nearshore, Landowner Workshop planning meeting to share information about successful approaches to working with landowners. Erica will show a few slides from the Skagit MRC to share our successes including the Shore Stewards Workshops. Most of Skagit MRC's projects involve some form of education and outreach.

#### **NWSC/MRC Chair and Staff Meeting:**

- **Communication:**
  - The MRCs need to find a way to become more visible in the community.
  - When presenting to local officials, it is important to articulate the value of the MRC. We need to show how we have accomplished many local projects on a small budget and how we sometimes act as a catalyst for much larger projects. It is also important to emphasize that most of our projects are part of a collaborative effort and are accomplished through multiple partnerships.
  - It would be a good idea to get more face time with the Commissioners. We could invite the Commissioners out to a project site or invite them out on a derelict gear vessel trip.
  - The MRC Fact Sheet should include information about the Puget Sound Partnership's (PSP) Local Integrating Organization (LIO) structure and the role of MRC.
  - The NWSC monthly newsletter is a great way to increase visibility of the MRCs. We could submit events and short write-ups and photos to include in newsletter. The newsletters are widely distributed and go out to most elected officials. Please contact Aundrea Hood if you have names of people who you think should be on the distribution list.
  - The NWSC has a Facebook page. Be sure to "Like" the NWSC page and share it with others.
  - The Jefferson County MRC created a video about their MRC which included interviews of several MRC members. It was a great way to showcase the diversity of their MRC membership interest groups and to tell their story. The link to the video is provided on their website as well as on the NWSC website. They said that anyone can create a similar video with an inexpensive microphone and video camera or camera phone. To make it a little different, the video can be updated with a member of the month, or special project of the month.
- **Low Budget Community Events:**
  - **Ocean Acidification Seminar:** Caroline is working with the MRCs to set up a free two hour "Ocean Acidification" seminar that will be open to the public. The seminars will be sponsored by the Ocean Acidification Blue Ribbon Panel and members of the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership. The MRCs would be responsible for advertising and hosting (provide coffee & refreshments). A local official should be invited to provide welcoming remarks. Caroline suggested asking Brady Olson from Shannon Point to be one of the presenters in Skagit County.
  - **"Sound and Vision" film:** The Jefferson County MRC plans to show this film and ask for donations at the door. It is a great inexpensive way to increase the MRC's visibility in the community. Sasha said she would help Skagit MRC set up a showing of this film if interested.
- **NWSC/Foundation Retreat:** The retreat will likely be held in March at Padilla Bay. They plan to hire a facilitator for strategic planning. The primary areas of focus will likely include:
  - Reduce demand of shoreline armoring
  - Protect and restore eelgrass and kelp
  - Restore and protect shoreline and marine habitats
  - Reduce pollutants from stormwater runoff and wastewater (phytoremediation)
  - Improve understanding of ocean acidification

- Forage fish monitoring, protection, and enhancement
- Protect and restore native shellfish
- **Funding Status:**
  - The NWSF raised \$15,000 and met the private match of \$15,000 in 2012!!
  - Senator Reinhart included \$250k for the NWSC/MRCs (equivalent to the coastal MRCs budget) in the proposed 2013 state budget.
  - Ginny is currently in communications with the Puget Sound Partnership to provide capacity funding to the NWSC/MRCs.
  - It is always important to try to leverage any funding received.
  - Potential sources of funding were discussed including:
    - The Chamber of Commerce for Tourism Tax for advertising special events. These funds could be used as a match. Partnering with them would help them compete for additional funding as well.
    - The WDFW Crabber Endorsement Fee/Crabber Penalty Fee for projects that directly benefit crabs (crab pot removal and stewardship/outreach). Most of the crab penalty fees have been going towards wildlife hunting enforcement. This could be a good fit for MRC projects.
- **MRC Sustainability:**
  - The NWSC has requested the MRCs develop a 'Sustainability Plan' focused on a funding strategy as part of the grant deliverable due: June 30, 2013. The Sustainability Plan should also include the PSP's LIO structure and funding opportunities. We should document what has been done and what we hope to do. The Sustainability Plan should be part of the operational component of the Skagit MRC's 5-Yr Strategic Plan. It should show how we plan to find funding and what we plan to do with it.
- **NOAA Restoration Center Grant Opportunity:** The NWSC is planning on putting together a regional restoration proposal that will involve some or all of the MRCs. The work must directly benefit ESA-listed fish or their prey. The NWSC focus will be on rockfish, forage fish, and subsurface kelp. The NWSC is looking for ideas from MRCs to include in the proposal by Monday, January 14! Skagit MRC members expressed interest in participating in a regional restoration grant proposal with a primary focus on the following:
  - Forage fish surveys
  - Kelp surveys
  - Forage Fish Spawning Habitat Restoration (i.e. Riprap removal/shoreline restoration at Shannon Point and Bowman Bay)

#### **2013 Skagit Restoration Initiative Workplan:**

- Joan Drinkwin provided an overview of the 2013 SRI Workplan. The Workplan will include: Maintaining and monitoring native vegetation plantings along the shoreline at the East March's Point boat ramp; monitoring and maintenance at the Weaverling Spit restoration site; Olympia oyster restoration in Fidalgo Bay; Beach nourishment at West March's Point south of the Shell Boat Launch; and long-term monitoring of forage fish spawning habitat restoration in Fidalgo Bay. The rest of the funding will be put aside for future projects. The total 2013 SRI budget is \$103,254.00 and \$128,620.00 in outside matching funds. The consensus of the MRC members was to approve the 2013 SRI Workplan.

#### **Skagit MRC Workplan Development:**

- Due to the limited timeframe during regularly scheduled Skagit MRC business meetings, the MRC members decided that a separate meeting will be necessary in order to focus on the development of a workplan. The workplan development meeting will be held January 31, 2013 at the Padilla Bay Reserve Center, 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Paul Dinnel volunteered to provide chowder.

#### **Project Status & Discussion:**

- **WSU Beach Watchers:** The seminar series is underway and has been well attended. They moved the location of the lectures from the Anacortes Library to the Northwest Educational

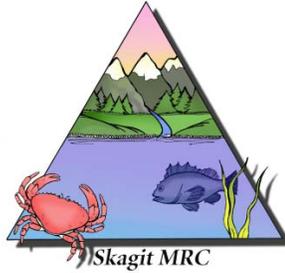
Service District 189 Building in Anacortes, to better accommodate the growing number of people attending. The next lecture will be held this Friday, January 11<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. The lecture will be about the National Wildlife Refuge System, presented by the Refuge Manager, Lorenz Sollman. The Director for the WSU Extension for Skagit County put in a request to hire a new WSU Beach Watcher Coordinator for Skagit County. He is still waiting for a response. The Director of entire WSU Extension, Rich Koenig, will be meeting with the Beach Watchers on January 15. Rich indicated that he would make a decision with regards to the Skagit County WSU Beach Watchers program in March.

- **Community Beach Seining Event:** Paul completed the final report.
- **Native Oyster Restoration:** A graduate student is working on the final report.
- **Shannon Point Riprap Removal:** The City of Anacortes provided survey data for a parcel on the edge of the neighborhood. The Request for Quotes will be sent out this month.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** The event will be held September 14, 2013. Erica cannot chair the event this year.
- **Weaverling Spit Beach Restoration:** Todd Woodard completed the project site “walk through” with Jim Johannessen and the Fish and Wildlife Service on January 8th for Phase 3 of the proposed beach restoration project. They are beginning the search for funding.

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

- Ocean Acidification Seminars: January 24 in Everett and February 27 in Friday Harbor.
- “From Satellite to Salish Sea: The National Wildlife Refuge System, A Network for Wildlife” presented by Lorenz Sollman: January 15 at 7:00 p.m. at the Northwest Educational Service District 189 Building in Anacortes.
- Ivar Dolph stated that there was a recent article about Shellfish in Washington in “High Country News,” an environmental journal based out of Colorado. They frequently have articles about environmental issues in Washington. Previous articles included tribal concerns, land use issues, and environmental concerns. Check out the journal online: <http://www.hcn.org>.
- Erica said that Seattle’s Zipcar program [www.zipcar.com/](http://www.zipcar.com/) has reduced car use by 80%. [www.Getaround.com](http://www.Getaround.com) is a similar program.

**The meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, February 14, 2013, at the Fidalgo Bay RV Park.**



# Skagit County Marine Resources Committee

Minutes of the February 14, 2013 meeting held at the Fidalgo Bay RV Park

**Members Attending:** Tracy Alker, Erica Pickett, Jay Lind, Ivar Dolph, Jim Ramaglia, Julie Barber, Kari Odden, Kristin Rine, Christine Woodward, Todd Woodard, Betsy Stevenson

**Members Absent:** Scott Schuyler, Lori Kyle, Paul Dinnel, Charles O'Hara, Rachel Benbrook, Teri Switalski

**Others Attending:** Sharon Riggs, Padilla Bay NERR; Pete Hasse, Citizen

**Call to Order and Introductions:** Kari Odden began the meeting at 9:15 a.m.

**Minutes:** Approved

**Public Comments:** Pete Haase announced that the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is conducting forage fish surveys at all of the aquatic reserves with the help of trained volunteers. Forage fish surveys at the Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve are being conducted by the Skagit Beach Watcher volunteers. So far they've only been out twice and sampled 13 – 14 sites just north of the trestle on both sides of Fidalgo Bay. The Beach Watchers used to have to borrow equipment every time they went out. Thanks to the Skagit MRC, the Beach Watcher volunteers recently received three sieves purchased by the Northwest Straits Foundation for the Skagit MRC's forage fish monitoring program. Now that they have access to equipment, they will be able to conduct forage fish surveys more often.

## **Northwest Straits Commission/Foundation Report:**

- **Strategic Plan Update:** Christine reported that the Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) spent some time discussing the process of updating the Northwest Straits Initiative (NWSI) strategic plan. The Executive Committee has been working hard to figure out where the primary focus should be. The strategic plan was developed in 2008 during a time when there was a more stable budget.
- **NWSI Strategic Planning Retreat:** The Northwest Straits Initiative strategic planning retreat will be held Thursday and Friday, March 21-22 at the Padilla Bay Reserve. The tentative schedule is: Thursday 10am–5pm and Friday 9am–4pm. An agenda and final schedule will be distributed in February.
- **Budget Reduction:** In recognition of an uncertain future for funding, the Commission proposed potential ways to cut back on expenses:
  - Reducing the NWSC staff to three people will help save money. Per Ginny's recommendation, they will not re-fill Andrea Hood's position as the NWSC Program Coordinator. The budget and job descriptions will need to be revised accordingly.
  - The number of Commission meetings will be reduced from ten to six which will help reduce the workload for staff.
  - The number of newsletters will be reduced from twelve to six.
  - Commission staff involvement in planning the annual MRC conference will be decreased.

- The Commission discussed ways to reduce costs for the MRC conference including moving the conference to someplace less expensive like the Fidalgo Bay RV Park. There are plenty of affordable places for people to stay nearby including the bunk house at Padilla Bay. Tracy agreed to look in to the availability of the bunk house during the December 8-9 conference timeframe.
- Communication To Elected Officials: Jerry Masters went to Washington DC with volunteers to seek support from legislators and possible funding for the NWSI. He urged MRC members to meet with local officials to advocate the value of our volunteers, our multiple partnerships, and success of our locally driven MRC projects. Christine said that it is also important to emphasize the support of tribes and their involvement in MRCs. Sally Hintz (Maria Cantwell's office) said that it would be helpful to communicate the value of the NWSI by demonstrating how money is leveraged. Ginny also plans to meet with elected officials in Washington D.C. in April while she is there for a NAFTA advisory committee meeting.
- MRC Grants: MRC grant funding from the Puget Sound Partnership officially expires September 2013. MRC grants are scheduled to end in June, but extending the end date to August 31 may help MRCs complete small projects and streamline the addition of any new funding.
- Puget Sound Partnership Update: Tony Wright is leaving the Puget Sound Partnership. A search for his replacement is underway.

#### **Administrative Report:**

- Ocean Acidification Seminar: The Skagit MRC will host a seminar on Ocean Acidification on March 13, 2013 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Seafarer's Memorial Park Building in Anacortes. The event will be free and open to the public. Skagit County Commissioner Ron Wesen volunteered to provide a few opening remarks. Erica will introduce the Skagit MRC. The presenters will include: Dr. Brady Olsen (WWU Shannon Point Marine Center) & Brad Warren (Sustainable Fisheries Partnership). Betsy offered to invite Bill Dewey to present as well. Skagit MRC will be responsible for advertising and providing coffee & refreshments. There was some concern that the Seafarer's Memorial Park Building would not be large enough. Tracy said that she would look into other options including the Shannon Point Library, the Padilla Bay Reserve, and the Fidalgo Bay RV Park.
- Election of MRC Officers: Kari Odden was elected as the Skagit MRC Chair and Jay Lind was elected as the MRC Vice-Chair per consensus of the MRC. Rachel Benbrook will continue as the NWSC representative and Christine Woodward will continue as the NWSC Alternative for one more year.
- MRC Display: Tracy asked for suggestions for improving the MRC display. The MRC display needs to be updated with the latest projects and photos. The MRC display will be hosted at several upcoming events
  - MVHS Science Night: April 25 (6:00-8:30pm) – Betsy will host the MRC Display.
  - Taylor Shellfish-tival: July 24 10am – 3:00 pm. Erica will host the MRC Display and kid's activities (Marine Critter stamps and Brittle Stars)
  - Skagit River Salmon Festival: September 7 - We will need a volunteer to help with the MRC Display.
  - Fidalgo Bay Day: September 14 - We will need a volunteer to help with the MRC Display.
- Oil Spill Response Grant: The NWSF, in collaboration with San Juan MRC, recently received a \$60,000 grant from the WA Department of Natural Resources to support outreach, education, and preparedness. Although the bulk of the work will be conducted by the San Juan MRC, other MRCs from Whatcom, Skagit, Island, Clallam, and Jefferson will receive a little funding to help coordinate and host two informational workshops that will be free and open to the public. Additional workshops with more "hands-on" training will be provided in some of the other counties, but not Skagit County. In addition, the Foundation will develop and establish a local incident notification communication tree for each county that does not currently have one.
- Skagit MRC Brochure: Beach Watcher Ric Boge completed the second draft of the Skagit MRC brochure which is currently being reviewed by Ivar and Tracy. The next step will be to insert photos. After the final edits have been made, the final brochure will be routed to MRC members to review before it is sent to the printers.

- **Fundraising:** Jay Lind suggested approaching private associations, such as the Puget Sound Anglers, for contributions to help support the work of the Skagit MRC. It would be helpful if MRC members could get some kind of training on how to approach organizations for funding. We could create a presentation specifically geared toward this type of thing and invite Joan or Robyn to help give the presentation. The presentation could include a basic overview of the MRC and the NWSC and what specific projects we are seeking funding for, how the funding would be leveraged, and how the organization would be recognized for their donation. Jay said that we should also consider creating MRC business cards to hand out to people as well.

**ECONet Update:** Erica reported that Skagit Education, Communication and Outreach Network (ECONet) is now meeting quarterly to share information. The Skagit Conservation Education Alliance (SCEA) is the lead agency. They are still trying to figure out what the rules are and how things should be run. No bylaws have been established.

**MRC Project Evaluation:** The NWSC recently sent out a Request for Proposals to the MRC's for three priority projects that can be accomplished between July 1, 2013 and June 30, 2014. In addition, the projects must have a connection to the Puget Sound Partnership Action Agenda. The proposals are due March 20<sup>th</sup>. The project leads will be asked to help draft the project proposals. Not knowing how much funding we will get or if we will get any funding at all made it a challenging process.

The Committee discussed different scenarios for different layers of funding (low, medium, and high). Several priority projects were identified including: Fidalgo Bay Day, community beach seining, car wash kit promotion, Beach Naturalist etiquette training, Beach Watcher 100 hour core training, marine shoreline protection assessment, and permits for the Shannon Point riprap removal and Bowman Bay riprap removal projects. Several other priority projects were also identified but it was determined that more information was needed: vegetated bioswale installation along O' Avenue, stormwater diversion and/or phytoremediation at Bayview, creosote piling/marine debris removal, phytoremediation at March's Point along the drainage ditch; tidal exchange restoration (tide gate) and/or phytoremediation at No Name Slough; carbon sequestration potential of salt marshes; targeted forage fish monitoring with kayakers; and Olympia oyster genetic search.

The Committee decided that some of the projects could be packaged together. For example: Fidalgo Bay Day, community beach seining, car wash kit promotion, Beach Naturalist etiquette training, and Beach Watcher 100 hour core training could all be packaged together as 'Education and Outreach.' The Shannon Point riprap removal permits and the Bowman Bay riprap removal permits could also be packaged together as 'Marine Habitat Restoration.' The marine shoreline protection assessment project would fit by itself under the 'Marine Science' benchmark. Kari agreed to recuse herself from any decisions regarding the marine shoreline protection assessment project in order to avoid any potential conflicts of interest. Tracy will revise the project evaluation spreadsheet with alternative budget scenarios before the next MRC meeting. The Committee will have to select and approve the three Skagit MRC priority projects for the NWSC grant proposal at the next MRC meeting in order to meet the March 20<sup>th</sup> grant application deadline.

#### **Project Status & Discussion:**

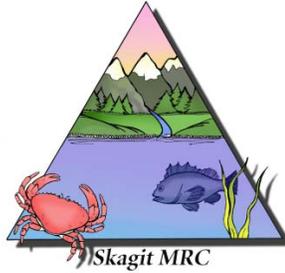
- **WSU Beach Watchers:** Ivar reported that the Beach Watchers are helping Western Washington University and Friday Harbor Labs conduct marine bird and mammal inventories aboard the research vessel, Centennial. The next trip will be February 19<sup>th</sup> and again March 12<sup>th</sup>. Don said that the WSU Ext has put together a task force to investigate the liability of the WSU Beach Watcher group and they are scheduled to report back to Associate Dean, Rich Koenig by March 15<sup>th</sup>. The Friends of Skagit Beach's (FOSB) 'Trail Tales program' is seeking volunteers. Applications must be received by March 15<sup>th</sup>. Group training days are in March and April. Contact Nancy Olsen at [nancy.skagitbeaches@gmail.com](mailto:nancy.skagitbeaches@gmail.com) or [friends@skagitbeaches.org](http://friends@skagitbeaches.org). The FOSB's Fidalgo Shoreline Academy (a one day university) will be held Saturday, April 27 8:30 am – 3:30 pm at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort. The keynote speaker will be Dr. Ron Lindsay – "The Changing Arctic." There will also be an interpretive walk as part of the Trail Tales program. FOSB is selling raffle tickets as a fundraiser for the Shoreline Academy (two boat trips; Skagit Land Trust Book; and two prints).
- **Native Oyster Restoration:** No Report
- **Shannon Point Riprap Removal:** No Report
- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** The event will be held September 14, 2013. Kari odden volunteered to be the project lead and Erica Pickett will be co-project lead for Fidalgo Bay this year.

- **Skagit Restoration Initiative Project Update:**
  - **Northwest March's Point Beach Enhancement:** Erica Pickett contacted the property owners of the project site as well as the Tesoro and Shell refineries. Apparently, much of the beach sediment had been removed several years ago after an oil spill. So the property owners seemed pleased that we plan to restore the beach. Both refineries approve of the project as well. Todd Woodard recommended the MRC consider planting native plants along the shoreline to provide some shade for the forage fish eggs which is important for their survival. In the past, Tesoro has been reluctant to allow the planting of trees along the shoreline due to security concerns. Erica said that it might be worth talking to them again about the possibility of planting shoreline vegetation.
  - **Tesoro's Emergency Boat Ramp Removal-** Erica reported that Tesoro has plans to build a new emergency boat ramp before removing the old ramp. The timeframe for this project is uncertain. The boat ramp removal was listed as a high priority project for the Skagit MRC, but will have to be put on hold for now.
  - **Weaverling Spit Beach Restoration:** Christine announced that the report for the Weaverling Spit Beach Restoration project is complete. Tracy emailed a copy of the report to the MRC.

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

- Skagit Conservation District's Annual Water Quality Presentation: Wednesday, February 20, 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm at the Padilla Bay Research Reserve.
- Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group's Annual Meeting and Salmon BBQ: February 28, 2013 6-9 PM .
- Skagit Land Trust's 7th Annual Auction & Dinner: Saturday, March 2, 5:00 PM to 9:00 PM at St. Joseph Center.
- Todd announced that the Samish Indian Nation recently purchased a new boat. The boat can be used as a potential resource for future MRC projects. The MRC would just need to help cover the costs for fuel and maintenance. The Samish Indian Nation plans to use the boat to conduct kelp surveys.

**The meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, March 14, 2013, at the Mount Vernon Senior Center.**



# Skagit County Marine Resources Committee

Minutes of the March 14, 2013 meeting held at the Mount Vernon Senior Center

**Members Attending:** Tracy Alker, Erica Pickett, Jay Lind, Ivar Dolph, Jim Ramaglia, Christine Woodward, Betsy Stevenson, Paul Dinnel, Rachel Benbrook, Teri Switalski

**Members Absent:** Lori Kyle, Charles O'Hara, Kari Odden

**Others Attending:** Gary Stoyka, Skagit County Public Works

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

**Minutes:** Approved

**Public Comments:** None

## **Northwest Straits Commission/Foundation Report (Conference call, February 22):**

- The Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) strategic planning retreat will be held March 21-22 at the Padilla Bay Reserve Center. Please let Rachel or Christine know if there are any topics of discussion you would like to share.
- Ocean Acidification seminars hosted by MRCs were recently held in Everett, Friday Harbor, and Anacortes. The next one will be held in Bellingham (March 28). Check the website [www.nwstraits.org](http://www.nwstraits.org) or contact Caroline for more details.
- In response to the Blue Ribbon Panel's recommendations on ocean acidification, Senator Kevin Ranker has introduced legislation that would establish the "Washington Marine Resources Protection Council" to implement the recommended actions. The 21-member council will include state officials and legislators, tribal members, local government, and representatives from environmental and marine industries. The Northwest Straits Commission will have a seat on the panel.
- The Request for Proposals that the Commission sent to the MRCs is due March 20 and should include a budget for MRC operations as well as priority project information. We need to be prepared to respond quickly if a funding opportunity arises.
- The Commission staff will forward a template that has been created for MRC sustainability plans. Sustainability plans will need to be included as a deliverable for our current grant funding. NWSC staff will work with the MRCs as needed to complete them.
- The Partnership provides weekly legislative updates that are very informative. Tony Wright's last day at the Partnership was March 1.
- There are two vacancies on the NWSC that need to be filled. It is not clear when Governor Inslee will make the new appointments, but there are pending applications.
- It is now more important than ever to contact state legislators to seek support of the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative (NWSI) and MRCs. Letters of support from local government officials would also be very valuable to have when contacting state legislators. The Foundation can provide a template as needed.

## **Administrative Report:**

- **Ocean Acidification Seminar:** The Skagit MRC recently hosted a seminar on Ocean Acidification on March 13, 2013 at the Seafarer's Memorial Park Building in Anacortes. Despite a few minor technical glitches and confusion with the location, the event was a huge success. In the end everything worked out. We counted 86 people in attendance! This was definitely a group effort. A big "Thank You" goes out to:
  - Caroline Gibson for organizing the entire event;
  - Teri Switalski for making arrangements with the Port to provide the building
  - Event introductions: Erica Pickett (MRC introduction), Rosie James and Adam Lorio (Samish Indian Nation introduction and song), and Skagit County Commissioner Sharon Dillon (welcome on behalf of the County);
  - The presenters: Dr. Brady Olsen "What is Ocean Acidification?", Bill Dewey "How Are Shellfish Coping?" and Brad Warren "Recommendations, Partnerships and Actions". The presenters did a really great job at making the topic of ocean acidification interesting and easy to understand. The MRCs were mentioned several times throughout each of their presentations;
  - Paul Dinnel and Betsy Stevenson for inviting two of the presenters (Dr. Brady Olsen and Bill Dewey);
  - Erica Pickett, Jay Lind, and Rachel Benbrook for helping to set-up;
  - Everyone who attended for helping to clean up; and
  - Thank you Erica for staying until the bitter end to check out.
- **Ocean Frontiers, the Dawn of a New Era in Ocean Stewardship:** The Skagit MRC discussed co-hosting the film premier "Ocean Frontiers" with the Friends of Skagit Beaches. Other potential partnerships could include: the tribes, the Port, Trident Seafoods, Taylor Shellfish, Skagit Conservation Education Alliance, etc. Some of the possible locations where the film could potentially be shown include: the Skagit Valley College Theater, the Lincoln Theater, the Northwest Educational Service District building, etc. Hosting this film would be a great opportunity to make the Skagit MRC more visible, bring awareness to issues impacting our marine environment, and how our volunteers/stewardship can really make a difference.
- **MRC Grant Amendment:** The grant will be extended through mid-September, 2013. Funding will be moved from money allocated for supplies to help cover the costs for the Community Beach Seining Day in June and early August and Fidalgo Bay Day in September.
- **MRC Website:** Due to a few conflicts, the County was unable to contract out for the development and design of a new MRC website. The NWSC has agreed to contract for the website work on behalf of the MRC.
- **NWSC Representative Clarification:** MRC members agreed that due to Rachel's uncertain work schedule, Christine Woodward should be the NWSC representative and Rachel should be the NWSC Alternate. Rachel will remain on the board of the Northwest Straits Foundation.
- **Skagit MRC Brochure:** Beach Watcher Ric Boge completed the third draft of the Skagit MRC brochure which was recently reviewed by Ivar. Tracy requested input from some of the other MRC members. Rachel and Betsy volunteered to review the brochure and provide comments.
- **Fundraising:** Jay Lind recently approached the Puget Sound Anglers about giving an MRC presentation to seek support. He found out that the Northwest Straits Foundation gave a presentation to the PSA not too long ago to seek funding for the derelict gear program. Jay said that he would try to contact Joan to get a copy of the presentation to make sure we don't duplicate it. MRC members believe that it is important to get some kind of guidance or training for fundraising. It would be a good idea to provide MRC members with talking points. It would also be a good idea to have a donation form and self-addressed envelopes ready to hand out.

**MRC Project Evaluation:** In response to the NWSC Request for Proposals that went out to the MRC's in January, the Skagit MRC evaluated three priority projects that can be accomplished between July 1, 2013 and June 30, 2014. Each project has a connection to the Puget Sound Partnership Action Agenda. The proposals are due March 20<sup>th</sup>. The project leads were asked to help draft the project proposals. The consensus of the Skagit MRC was to submit the following project proposals for a total budget request of \$58,650, in addition to a budget for **Task 1: MRC operations:**

- **Task 2: Education and Outreach (Total Estimated Budget \$18,650)**
  - 2.1 Community Beach Seining Day (\$650). Project Lead: Paul Dinnel

- 2.2 Beach Naturalist Etiquette Training (\$5,000). Project Lead: Ivar Dolph
- 2.3 Beach Watcher Training (\$13,000). Project Lead: Ivar Dolph
- **Task 3: Marine Habitat Restoration (Total Estimated Budget \$30,000)**
  - 3.1 Shannon Point Riprap Removal Permits (\$10,000). Project Lead: Erica Pickett
  - 3.2 Bowman Bay Riprap Removal Permits (\$10,000). Project Lead: Erica Pickett
  - 3.3 NW March's Point Beach Enhancement Permits (\$10,000). Project Lead: Erica Pickett
- **Task 4: Marine Shoreline Protection Assessment (Total Estimated Budget \$7,500)**  
Project Lead: Kari Odden

The Committee discussed alternative budget scenarios for different layers of funding (low, medium, and high). The Committee decided to wait to evaluate and prioritize the projects under the alternative budget scenarios until we have a better idea of what the budget will be.

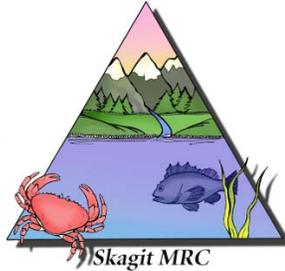
#### **Project Status & Discussion:**

- **WSU Beach Watchers:** Ivar reported that a Beach Watcher subcommittee is currently trying to figure out a way to make the program more sustainable. They are still waiting to hear back from WSU to find out whether or not they will be able to financially support the Beach Watcher program. Some of the Beach Watchers are helping Western Washington University and Friday Harbor Labs conduct marine bird and mammal inventories aboard the research vessel, Centennial. They recently went out on March 12th. The Friends of Skagit Beach's (FOSB) 'Trail Tales program' is seeking volunteers. Applications must be received by March 15<sup>th</sup>. Group training days are in March and April. Contact Nancy Olsen at [nancy.skagitbeaches@gmail.com](mailto:nancy.skagitbeaches@gmail.com) or [friends@skagitbeaches.org](http://friends@skagitbeaches.org). The FOSB's Fidalgo Shoreline Academy (a one day university) will be held Saturday, April 27 8:30 am – 3:30 pm at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort. The keynote speaker will be Dr. Ron Lindsay – "The Changing Arctic." There will also be an interpretive walk as part of the Trail Tales program.
- **Native Oyster Restoration:** The graduate student is still working on the final report.
- **Shannon Point Riprap Removal:** Proposals from three different companies were evaluated and scored. The contract award will be announced as soon as the company that has been selected accepts the contract offer.
- **Bowman Bay Riprap Removal:** The Foundation, on behalf of the Skagit MRC, recently received an award letter confirming we will be receiving EPA funding through the Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program grant for the feasibility study. The next step will be to send out a Request for Proposals.
- **NW March's Point Beach Nourishment:** Erica contacted the property owners as well as the Shell and Tesoro refineries to seek approval for the beach enhancement project. They all agreed to sign a document to show their support of the project. The property owner said that much of the beach had been removed after an oil spill several years ago.
- **Weaverling Spit Beach Restoration:** The Phase III beach restoration proposal was presented to the Samish Indian Nation Tribal Council. The Tribal Council agreed to support the project and plans to move forward with funding which will require a match. Christine hopes to seek Skagit Restoration Initiative funds as a match.

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

- MVHS Science Night: April 25 (6:00-8:30pm): Betsy will host the MRC Display.
- Padilla Bay Research Symposium: May 1, 2013. More details to come.
- Carbon Sequestration Feasibility Study: Christine announced that the Samish Indian Nation recently received funding from the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission, the EPA, and the Puget Sound Partnership, to conduct a feasibility study for the carbon sequestration potential of the Fidalgo Bay saltmarsh.
- Fidalgo Bay Water Quality Monitoring: The Samish Indian Nation is monitoring 41 outfalls in Fidalgo Bay. Christine will ask Adam Lorio to give an update at the next Skagit MRC meeting.

**The meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, April 11, 2013, at the Fidalgo Bay RV Park.**



# Skagit County Marine Resources Committee

Minutes of the April 11, 2013 meeting held at the Samish Indian Nation's Fidalgo Bay RV Park

**Members Attending:** Tracy Alker, Erica Pickett, Jay Lind, Ivar Dolph, Jim Ramaglia, Christine Woodward, Paul Dinnel, Rachel Benbrook, Teri Switalski, Kari Odden, Julie Barber (Alternate)

**Members Absent:** Lori Kyle, Charles O'Hara, Betsy Stevenson

**Others Attending:** Wendy Steffensen, RE-Sources; Adam Lorio, Samish Indian Nation; Sharon Riggs, Padilla Bay NERR; Pete Haase, Citizen; Joan Drinkwin, NWSF

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

**Minutes:** Approved

**Public Comments:** Sharon Riggs said that a Request for Proposals for the Pacific Northwest Bay-Watershed Education and Training (B-WET) grant went out about a week ago and thought that it might be good fit for some of the Skagit MRC projects. The deadline is April 23, 2013.

**Fidalgo Bay Water Quality Monitoring- Presented by Adam Lorio**

The Samish Indian Nation has been monitoring Fidalgo Bay stormwater outfalls since 2005 using Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) quality assurance/ quality control monitoring protocol. Monitoring parameters include: fecal coliform, nitrate/nitrite, total phosphorus, DO%, pH, salinity, temperature, and turbidity. From 2007-2009, additional funding from the Skagit MRC allowed for sampling of metals, pesticides, PCBs and nutrients at a subset of the sites. Today, over 40 sites, including some upland drainage sites, are monitored twice monthly. The project is being funded by an EPA grant administered by the Puget Sound Partnership. The City of Anacortes helped map the Fidalgo Bay watershed drainage connections, including the best upland sampling locations. In some cases, they had to use dyes to trace the watershed drainage connections. Understanding the watershed characteristics and drainage connections is very helpful when looking for trends and trying to track the source of water quality issues. In addition, they have a contract with USGS to develop a circulation model of Fidalgo Bay to better understand how water moves in and out of Fidalgo Bay.

Data is compiled annually and is broken down by wet season (Nov-April) and dry season (May-Oct) for analysis. The parameters for each site are compared to Washington State Water Quality Standards for Surface Water, if applicable, and the Washington State Department of Ecology's Water Quality Index (WQI) scores for Puget Sound. Preliminary results showed several hits of high levels of fecal coliform at some of the March's Point outflow sampling sites in Fidalgo Bay. The water quality standards for fecal coliform levels are stricter for seawater than they are for fresh water. The three deep marine water sites that are currently being monitored have not exceeded the threshold for fecal coliform levels. There are some urban areas that also have high levels of fecal coliform. The Samish Indian Nation and the City hope to begin a public education and outreach campaign to bring awareness to the local residents to show how they can make a difference. The initial 5 year summary report and 2010-2011 summary report available on the Samish DNR website:

<http://www.samishtribe.nsn.us/programs/natural-resources/>. Thanks goes out to City of Anacortes Staff, Robert Hoxie and Don Measamer, for help in tracing existing outfalls and drainages.

### **Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve- Presented by Wendy Steffesen**

The Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve encompasses over 650 acres of state-owned tidelands and bedlands. It is one of seven Aquatic Reserves established by the WA Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to ensure protection of the important unique habitats and species identified in the Puget Sound region. A Citizen Stewardship Committee was formed for the Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve to help implement DNR's Management Plan for the Reserve. A copy of the Management Plan is available on DNR's website: [http://www.dnr.wa.gov/Publications/aqr\\_rsve\\_fid\\_mgmt\\_plan.pdf](http://www.dnr.wa.gov/Publications/aqr_rsve_fid_mgmt_plan.pdf).

This citizen stewardship project is funded by a grant from WDFW/DNR awarded to People for Puget Sound. After People for Puget Sound dissolved, the grant was transferred to the Washington Environmental Council. The grant ends December 2013, but they plan to seek an extension. The Committee meets quarterly and is supported by staff from RE-Sources for Sustainable Communities and the Washington Environmental Council. Wendy strongly encouraged members of the Skagit MRC to join the Fidalgo Bay Citizen Stewardship Committee. The three areas of focus established by the Committee are: Citizen Science; Education and Outreach; and Technical Reviews.

- **Citizen Science:** The Fidalgo Aquatic Reserve Citizen Stewardship Committee will be hosting intertidal monitoring trainings and surveys to conduct beach profiling and establish a baseline of the flora and fauna in the intertidal zone of the Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve. DNR approved protocol/quality control will be used and intertidal marine flora and fauna ID experts will be on hand. Data will be given to DNR and posted on the Re-Sources website. Volunteers are needed to help with the classroom and field training sessions and surveys. The classroom session will take place Sunday 4/21, 10 am - 3:30 pm, at the Fidalgo Bay RV Park in Anacortes. The field session will take place Sunday 4/28, 10:30-2:30 (meeting place to be determined). If you cannot make these trainings there are also trainings in Whatcom County that you can attend. The classroom sessions will be held Wednesday evenings, 4/10, 4/17, 4/24 from 6-8 pm and the field session will be held Saturday 4/27, 10:30-2:30, at Marine Park in Bellingham. Please register by e-mailing [bkintern@re-sources.org](mailto:bkintern@re-sources.org) or by calling 360 733-830 and asking for Mateo or Wendy. Fidalgo Bay surveys will take place on low-tide days in May and June. The logistics and site access are still being worked out for some of the survey sites. Surveys in Whatcom County will take place on low tide days May-July.

- **Education and Outreach:** An Education and Outreach subcommittee was formed to plan community events, presentations, host educational booths, create road signs for the Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve, etc. They are currently working on a National Estuaries Day Program in collaboration with the Friends of Skagit Beaches that will be held September 28<sup>th</sup>.

- **Technical Review:** The goal is to educate local citizens and provide them with tools to have an effective voice in the public process to protect the Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve. One topic could be how to provide public comment on land use proposals or what to do about derelict vessels.

For more information about the Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve Citizen Stewardship Committee, contact Wendy Steffensen, Lead Scientist, RE Sources, [waters@re-sources.org](mailto:waters@re-sources.org) 360- 733-8307.

### **Northwest Straits Commission/Foundation Report (Strategic Planning Retreat March 21-22):**

- We need to strengthen recognition of the Initiative and improve our diversity of funding
- The NWSI programmatic framework should be narrowed down to focus on common priorities for the MRCs throughout the Northwest Straits region. Regional priorities will provide direction for the organization. The three core programmatic priorities include:
  1. Protect and Restore Nearshore Habitat
  2. Water Quality (includes Toxics, Nutrients and Ocean Acidification)
  3. Protect and Restore Species and Populations
- It is still unclear how adopting regional priorities would affect future projects and funding opportunities, or decisions of the MRCs. MRCs can still do local projects, but may need to find their own funding. Funding will need to be tied to projects that people can see. It is difficult to ask for funding if we have no specific focus.
- The strategic plan hasn't been updated since 2008. A full strategic planning process has been put on hold for now, but will need to take place over the coming year to help clarify things. Ginny was directed to rewrite a draft chapter of the strategic plan and used the following criteria to determine possible areas of focus.
- The group voted in favor of establishing a separate Foundation Board in order for the Foundation to be an effective and healthy non-profit. The Board members don't have to be

current MRC members. Board members will provide updates to the MRCs. Rachel has been assigned to the committee to help develop the structure. They will make a recommendation in May.

- The development of an initiative-wide strategic planning process will be on hold until the new Foundation board is established and the new commissioners are in place.
- Jerry and Ginny will work on our long term sustainability plan which will help develop new solutions, new agency connections, and ultimately a new funding “home” for the organization.
- Governor’s office needs to move on one current vacancy, Ginny is pursuing candidates for the other.
- There needs to be a consistent and complete orientation for MRC members. This should be addressed in the future with more clarity with the MRC staff (make topic for MRC staff meeting).
- After reviewing the structure and roles of the Commission, Foundation, MRCs, and the combined staff it was mentioned that there should be clarity around the roles of the MRC staff. It was also suggested that there should be more dialogue about the role of each MRCs to its affiliated new county council/ commission members, and the whole NWSI relationship to our local officials.
- The next Commission meeting will be held via conference call **April 19th 10-Noon.**

**ECONet:** ECONet was created as a networking opportunity for environmental educators in Skagit County to share information and establish better partnerships. ECONet helps the Puget Sound Partnership distribute education and outreach grants throughout the year. Unfortunately, the structure and process about how to do it is still unclear. Meetings are currently held quarterly.

#### **Administrative Report:**

- Ocean Frontiers, the Dawn of a New Era in Ocean Stewardship: Skagit MRC volunteers are needed to join the subcommittee to help plan and organize a showing of this film in partnership with the Friends of Skagit Beaches. The subcommittee will be tasked with determining the date, time, and location to show the film, contact other potential partners, coordinate who will give the introductions, coordinate guest speakers and/ or panel (if any), and determine if we want to ask for donations. Erica Pickett volunteered to join the subcommittee. Christine said the Samish Indian Nation might also be interested in co-hosting the film. Other potential co-hosts (the Port, Trident Seafoods, Taylor Shellfish, Skagit Conservation Education Alliance, etc.). Hosting this film will be a great opportunity to make the Skagit MRC more visible, bring awareness to issues impacting our marine environment, and how our volunteers/stewardship can really make a difference. The Friends of Skagit Beaches already purchased a copy of the film. Please let Tracy know if you would like to be a part of the planning subcommittee.
- MRC Grant Progress Reports: Progress reports are due **April 15<sup>th</sup>**. Please send Tracy project updates and volunteer hours for the period of January 1 – March 31, 2013.
- Skagit MRC Grant Project Proposals: A big “Thank You” goes out to Ivar Dolph and Kari Odden for developing some of the project proposals for the Skagit MRC grant. We were able to get the proposals submitted on time.
- Marine Protected Areas Online Survey: A graduate student at The Evergreen State College is conducting research for their Master’s thesis, “Perceptions of Marine Protected Areas in the Puget Sound: A study of resource users and managers” and has requested participation of Skagit MRC members. Tracy forwarded the survey earlier this week. The deadline for participating in this survey is April 30, 2013.
- Oil Spill Preparedness and Response Grant: Tracy forwarded the Statement of Work to the MRC. The Foundation will draft a proposed scope of work and subcontracts for each county by the end of the month.
- MRC Grant Amendment: The grant is currently being amended to extend the grant expiration date from June 30, 2013 to Sept 15, 2013. This will allow the grant to cover the Community Beach Seining Day in June and August as well as Fidalgo Bay Day in September.
- MRC Website: Still waiting to get a signed contract between the NWSI & Mindfly.
- MRC Brochure Update (“A Report to the Community”): Currently being reviewed by Rachel and Betsy. The graphics need to be updated and the report finalized before printing.
- MRC Presentation: The MRC presentation outline will include: Skagit MRC History, Org Chart & MRC members, MRC Mission and Goals, partnerships, funding history, benchmarks, 2012

Projects, and next Steps. Skagit MRC completed eleven projects in 2012: *Spartina* Surveys, Shannon Point riprap removal draft feasibility study, NE. March's Point habitat restoration, Padilla Bay Tidelands Acquisition, Weaverling Spit beach restoration, native oyster restoration, forage fish survey training, WSU Beach Watcher training, Fidalgo Bay Day, Community Beach Seining Day, and plastic cap recycling. We need to determine what projects we would like to highlight in the presentation. MRC members who volunteered to help with the presentation will go through a practice run prior to giving the presentation.

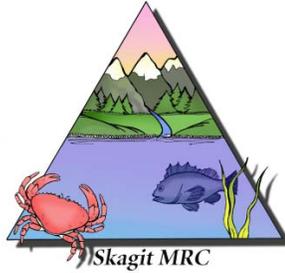
### **Project Status & Discussion:**

- **WSU Beach Watchers:** Ivar reported that WSU has agreed to support the Beach Watcher program for at least one year. This will give Beach Watchers a little more time to look at other options for a more sustainable solution. Skagit Beach Watchers are currently working with Island County Beach Watchers to look at different options and other potential partnerships. They met with Terri at Padilla Bay. Terri is very interested in a volunteer program at Padilla Bay, but they do not currently have the funding to support it.
- **Native Oyster Restoration:** The final report will be complete in a couple of weeks. Paul applied for and received the permit from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife to distribute oyster shell in cultch bags around Fidalgo Bay for oyster larvae recruitment in June-July. The oyster shell cultch bags that were distributed last year will be collected in June-July to look for new oyster recruitment.
- **Shannon Point Riprap Removal:** The contract for the feasibility study and project design was awarded to Coastal Geologic Services. They cannot begin work until July.
- **Bowman Bay Riprap Removal:** The Foundation is still working on getting a grant agreement in place. The next step will be to send out a Request for Proposals for the feasibility study and project design.
- **NW March's Point Beach Nourishment:** The contract to do the engineering work was awarded to Coastal Geologic Services. We hope to come up with another \$20,000 for a match. Kyle Murphy with the Washington Department of Natural Resources said that there are still some Texaco funds left that could go towards this project as a match.
- **Community Beach Seining Day:** The Director of Shannon Point Marine Center agreed to be a joint partner with the Skagit MRC and offered to fund half of the boat time and captain for the Community Beach Seining Day event this year. However, the MRC will need to get a collections permit from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. Paul submitted the application for the permit. The permit will cost the MRC around \$117.
- **Phase III Weaverling Spit Beach Restoration:** A potential partner meeting will be held next week.

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

- MVHS Science Night: April 25 (6:00-8:30pm): Betsy will host the MRC Display.
- Padilla Bay Research Symposium: May 1, 2013. More details to come.
- Ocean On the Edge ("Transition Fidalgo & Friends" (formerly Skagit Beat the Heat): To help bring awareness to the impacts of sea level rise and ocean acidification. Sunday, April 21, 1:00 – 5:00 pm, at the Seafarer's Memorial Park building in Anacortes. Erica will host the MRC display.
- Fidalgo Shoreline Academy: Sat, April 27 8:30 am – 3:30 pm at the Fidalgo Bay Resort. Keynote Speaker: Dr. Ron Lindsay – "The Changing Arctic" and FOSB Interpretive Walk.
- Removal of the Elwha Dam and Ecological Restoration of the Elwha River: presented by Dean Butterworth, Friday, April 12, 2013, 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm at the North Educational Services District in Anacortes, as part of the Skagit Beach Watchers Winter Lecture series.

**The meeting adjourned at 11:05 a.m. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, May 9, 2013, at the Mount Vernon Senior Center.**



# Skagit County Marine Resources Committee

Minutes of the May 9, 2013 meeting held at the Mount Vernon Senior Center

**Members Attending:** Tracy Alker, Erica Pickett, Jay Lind, Ivar Dolph, Rachel Benbrook, Kari Odden, Julie Barber (Alternate)

**Members Absent:** Lori Kyle, Charles O'Hara, Betsy Stevenson, Jim Ramaglia, Christine Woodward, Teri Switalski, Paul Dinnel

**Others Attending:** Susan Wood, Padilla Bay NERR; Don McMoran, WSU Ext.; Gary Stoyka, Skagit County Public Works

**Call to Order and Introductions:** Kari Odden began the meeting at 9:10 a.m.

**Minutes:** Approved

**Public Comments:** None

## **Skagit Stream Team/Storm Team Report- Presented by Susan Wood**

The Skagit Stream Team is a joint project between the Padilla Bay Reserve and the Skagit Conservation District. Stream Team volunteers are trained to work in teams to collect water quality data on 12 different stream reaches located in Skagit County's three priority watersheds: the Nookachamps Creek Watershed; the Padilla Bay Watershed; and the Samish Watershed. The program is now in its 13<sup>th</sup> year. There are currently 75 trained Skagit Stream Team volunteers who monitor 50 sites on a monthly basis. Each site is sampled by two teams, so each site gets sampled twice a month. Most of the volunteers monitor four or five sites. Sampling over a nine month period (September through June) until the creeks dry up. Five different parameters are measured: dissolved oxygen (DO), temperature, turbidity, depth, and fecal coliform. The water quality standards for DO and temperature vary, depending on how the water body is used by salmon (i.e. salmon spawning habitat or just passing through). Fecal coliform is the primary focus of the Skagit Stream Team. The water quality standard for fecal coliform has two parts. Part I: The geometric mean is  $\leq 100\text{cfu}/100\text{ml}$  and Part II: No more than 10% of samples  $> 200\text{cfu}/100\text{ml}$ . Water samples are taken to the lab at Padilla Bay for testing. The Skagit Stream Team data is given to the County, the Department of Health, and the Department of Ecology. However, their data cannot be used to determine whether or not the streams are meeting the water quality standards because they aren't set up to be a regulatory program. If the state determines a particular stream to be impaired, a more rigorous monitoring program will need to be put in place by the state or county. In 2012, close to 1138 samples were taken and over 1200 hours were logged by Skagit Stream Team volunteers.

The Skagit Storm Team was formed in 2008 after the volunteers discovered a trend of high levels of fecal coliform after it rains. The Skagit Storm Team consists of ten volunteers who go out and sample 20 sites every time it rains at least 1/2 an inch or more. One of the sampling sites is used to determine if the Samish Bay Shellfish beds get closed due to health concerns associated with fecal coliform contamination. The shellfish beds will automatically close for five days until they get a clean sample. In response to the frequent shellfish bed closures due to high levels of fecal coliform, the

County was awarded a grant to help enhance the water quality monitoring program and cleanup effort in the Samish. Sampling results indicate that the water quality upstream of the mainstem of the Samish River is generally better than the water quality downstream. Six sampling sites had over 500 CFUs of fecal coliform and eight sites had over 200. Tests show that these extremely high bacteria levels seem to occur primarily in the spring and late fall. When high levels of fecal coliform can be traced to the source, the property owner is contacted to try to implement a solution. For example, one location at Parson's Creek used to get high hits of fecal coliform every time it rained. After it was brought to the attention of the property owners, they implemented Best Management practices and the fecal coliform levels dropped way down. Another example is where they traced high levels of fecal coliform to a barn with a sewer pipe that went right into the ditch. The property owner, who was not aware of the problem, removed the sewer pipe and the water quality was greatly improved. Although results show that a lot of progress has been made, there is still much work left to be done.

**Padilla Bay Research Symposium:** Ivar and Erica recently attended the Padilla Bay Science Symposium on May 1<sup>st</sup>. The main focus was on volunteerism and citizen science. The keynote speaker was Dr. Julia Parrish, Associate Director of the Aquatic and Fishery Sciences Department at the UW and Founder of the Coastal Observation and Seabird Survey Team (COASST) citizen science research program. The keynote address was followed by a session on "*Contributions of Citizen Science to the Study of Salish Sea Ecology: Existing Research, Future Possibilities*". Several presentations were provided by expert panelists followed by group discussions and a question and answer period. Smaller breakout sessions occurred in the afternoon. Discussions included challenges facing citizen science-based research and current and future environmental challenges such water quality issues, climate change and sea-level rise.

#### **Northwest Straits Commission/Foundation Report (Phone Conference):**

- **NWSC Officer Elections:** Christine Woodward was elected as the new NWSC Chair. Ken Carrasco from the Whatcom MRC was elected Vice-Chair. Jodi Kennedy is the newly elected gubernatorial representative on the NWSC. Jodi used to be with Surf Rider. There is still one vacant gubernatorial appointee. Rachel Benbrook can no longer serve as the alternate NWSC representative for the Skagit MRC, so a new alternate will need to be elected.
- **Ocean Acidification Seminars:** Over 500 people attended the Ocean Acidification seminars co-hosted by the NWSC and MRCs.
- **Snohomish MRC Website:** The Snohomish MRC now has a new page on their website about ocean acidification and coastal restoration outreach.
- **NWSC Budget/MRC Budget:** The Commission is looking for ways to help cut costs. They decided to cut travel for meetings and seek more sponsors for the NWSC/MRC conference. Caroline's position is now ¼ NWSC staff and the rest of her position is funded by the Puget Sound Partnership for her work with forage fish. Caroline is also serving on the state Octopus Advisory Committee. It is anticipated that the NWSI will be receiving \$900,000 from the EPA through the Puget Sound Partnership. \$65-\$70 will likely go to each MRC. The administrative budget varies widely among the MRCs. The Commission would like to standardize the administrative costs across the board to ensure the MRCs have enough funding to remain staffed.
- **NWSC/MRC Conference:** The conference will be held November 22-23 at the Best Western in Bellingham.
- The next NWSC meeting will be held May 31<sup>st</sup> in Coupeville.

#### **Administrative Report:**

- **Oil Spill Preparedness and Response Grant:** The Foundation drafted a subcontract for Skagit MRC that is currently being routed for signature. The oil spill response informational workshop will likely take place in October. MRC members will be asked to help plan this event.
- **MRC Grant Amendment:** The amendment is currently being reviewed by Ecology. The amendment extends the grant expiration date from June 30, 2013 to Sept 15, 2013. This will allow the grant to cover the Community Beach Seining Day in June and August as well as Fidalgo Bay Day in September.
- **MRC Website:** Tracy and Sasha met with the website company Mindfly, to get started on the new MRC website design. Tracy requested that MRC members provide Bios and photos to post on the new website. Tracy also requested photo ideas for the MRC homepage.

- MRC Brochure Update ("A Report to the Community"): Needs to be reviewed and finalized for printing. The format will be in a small booklet, the same as it has been in the past.
- MRC Presentation: Tracy completed the draft power point presentation. Erica will review the slide show and present it to the County Commissioners in June. Other MRC members are encouraged to participate.
- MRC Membership: Jay said that Lori can no longer be an active member on the MRC at this time but is interested in being involved as a non-voting member.

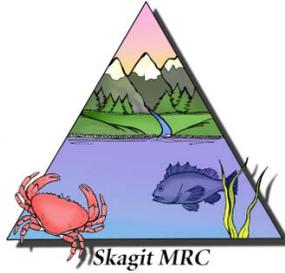
**Project Status & Discussion:**

- **WSU Beach Watchers**: Don McMoran, the WSU Extension Director for Skagit County, announced that WSU has approved funding to hire a full time Beach Watcher Coordinator for a period of one year and to provide the 100 hour Beach Watcher training program in Skagit County. The Skagit Beach Watcher Coordinator will help develop a statewide curriculum for all Beach Watchers. WSU plans to hire a permanent state-wide Beach Watcher Coordinator that will be based out of the WSU Extension office in Clallam County.
- **Native Oyster Restoration**: No Report
- **Shannon Point Riprap Removal**: No Report
- **Bowman Bay Riprap Removal**: Christine has replaced Lori as Jay's co-lead for this project.
- **NW March's Point Beach Nourishment**: Coastal Geologic Services completed the survey.
- **Community Beach Seining Day**: The next Community Beach Seining Day will take place Wednesday, June 19<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 pm at Ship Harbor next to the San Juan Ferry Terminal.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day**: Skagit Beach Watchers, Wayne Huseby and Lin Folsom, have volunteered to organize this year's Fidalgo Bay Day event.

**Miscellaneous Events and Announcements:**

- Skagit Day of Giving will be held at St. Joseph Center in Mount Vernon on Thursday, May 9, from 4:00pm – 8:00 pm. Several local community non-profit partners, including the Skagit Land Trust, hope to raise \$100,000 in matching funds from the Skagit Community Foundation. For every \$1 you give, your donation will be matched. Each of the participating organizations can earn up to \$15,000 in matching funds. Gifts accepted online at [www.skagitcf.com](http://www.skagitcf.com). This fund raising event will feature educational booths, food and beverages, and live music. Admission is free. The Skagit Land Trust will have a booth. They hope to develop a wish list of favorite places to go in Skagit County.

**The meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, June 13, 2013, at the Fidalgo Bay RV Park.**



# Skagit County Marine Resources Committee

Minutes of the June 13, 2013 meeting held at the Fidalgo Bay RV Park

**Members Attending:** Tracy Alker, Erica Pickett, Jay Lind, Kari Odden, Charles O'Hara, Christine Woodward, Paul Dinnel

**Members Absent:** Betsy Stevenson, Jim Ramaglia, Teri Switalski, Ivar Dolph

**Others Attending:** Sasha Horst, NWSC; Pete Haase, citizen; Nancy Olsen, citizen

**Call to Order and Introductions:** Jay Lind began the meeting at 9:05 a.m. Kari Odden resumed as Chair at 9:10

**Minutes:** Approved

**Public Comments:** None

## **Northwest Straits Commission Report (NWSC):**

- **MRC Grant:** The MRCs will receive \$70,000 in EPA funds through the Puget Sound Partnerships for projects. The new MRC grant will begin September 16, 2013, after the current grant agreement expires to avoid overlap, and end September 16, 2014. In addition, NOAA will provide \$200k to help cover NWSC administrative costs for 18 months.
- **MRC Project Proposals:** MRCs will need to try to be more accurate with budget estimates and budget tracking for projects. MRCs will also need to include stronger metrics in the project proposals. Christine will send out the template for developing metrics for project proposals.
- **MRC Conference:** Christine handed out "Save the Date" cards for the MRC conference that will be held in Bellingham at the Lakeway Inn on November 22-23, 2013. Registration information will be sent by email in early September. There will be another silent auction to help the Northwest Straits Foundation raise funds in support of MRC projects. The Foundation is trying to raise \$30k to cover conference costs for NWSC and NWSF staff. The NWSC is seeking MRC volunteers to join the conference planning committee. Contact Christine if you are interested in joining the committee. Several of the meetings will be done by phone.
- **NWSC Alternate Representative:** Christine, the NWSC Representative for the Skagit MRC, was recently elected as the new NWSC Chair. Rachel Benbrook recently resigned her position as the NWSC Alternate Representative. Jay Lind volunteered to replace Rachel as the NWSC Alternate Representative. Kari noted that we had a quorum and requested a vote via consensus. There were no objections. Jay was unanimously elected as the new NWSC Alternate Representative. Christine said that although she will most likely be attending all of the NWSC meetings as the NWSC Chair, she strongly encouraged Jay to attend the NWSC meetings to become familiar with the process.
- **How Do We Re-energize MRC Members?:** Some MRC's seem to have super energetic members who are getting a lot of stuff done, while others seem to have lost some of their

enthusiasm. The question is why? And how do we re-energize our MRC members? This could be a great topic of discussion at the MRC conference.

### **Social Marketing, Metrics for Measuring Behavior Change:**

Sasha discussed social marketing strategies and measuring behavior change. She shared what she learned from the social marketing training taught by Nancy Lee, through the Puget Sound Partnership. The training was offered to ECONet members along with a follow-up, train the trainers program. Social marketing was also one of the sessions at the last MRC conference. Social marketing is basically the application or process of communicating the value of something (a product, service, action, etc.) to achieve specific behavioral goals that benefit the community (or environment). Sasha handed out a quick reference guide on social marketing for influencing behaviors for good and outlines the planning process for social marketing related projects. Christine also offered to email the MRC a copy of the metrics for outreach and education efforts developed by the NWSC Science and Technical Committee. There are ten steps in the social marketing planning process that tend to be more spiral than linear as they are subject to revisions while going through the process. One of the ten steps is developing and implementing and evaluation plan to measure behavior change. It is now more important than ever to include a strong evaluation component in our project proposals to further our credibility of our volunteer efforts. Measuring the success of our work will also allow opportunities to track and make improvements if needed. The evaluation plan should outline what you are evaluating, why you will be evaluating, what will be measured, how and when. There have recently been a few grant funding opportunities for social marketing projects through the ECONet. There will likely be another round of funding for social marketing projects next year, so be on the look-out.

### **Administrative Report:**

- 2013 - 2014 MRC Grant Proposal Revisions:

- **Beach Naturalist Training:** The NWSC staff reviewed the Skagit MRC's project proposal for the upcoming grant, and suggested the Skagit MRC improve the metrics for the Beach Naturalist Training. The Committee discussed different options for measuring behavior change. The goal of the project is to protect the delicate intertidal marine life at our local beaches by educating students and teachers proper beach etiquette. The desired behavior change is for students to tread lightly, put overturned rocks back, wet their hands before touching animals, etc. Metrics could include observations, the number of participants, tests or surveys, educational materials, number of interactions, etc. Nancy Olsen offered to send some examples and resources for measuring behavior change. Tracy said she would forward the Beach Naturalist proposal to MRC members and Nancy for input before submitting the final proposal to the NWSC. A new project lead will need to be assigned to the Beach Naturalist Training project to replace Ivar.
- **Salish Sea Stewards Training:** The Skagit MRC's original proposal included a budget of \$13,000 to support the 100 hour WSU Beach Watcher training. However, WSU is providing 100% funding for a full time Beach Watcher Coordinator to develop and implement the Beach Watcher training, so it is no longer considered an MRC project. Erica stressed the importance of moving forward with our proposal for volunteer training since the future of the WSU Beach Watcher program is uncertain. Erica noted that we will need to select a new name for the MRC's volunteer program. Pete Haase suggested naming it the "Salish Sea Stewards." Kari requested a vote via consensus from the Committee. The Committee unanimously approved the "Salish Sea Stewards" as the official name of the MRC's volunteer training program. The Salish Sea Stewards volunteer training program will need to be slightly modified from the WSU Beach Watcher program to avoid conflict or overlap. Tracy will forward the proposal to the MRC and Nancy for input.
- **Community Beach Seining:** The NWSC staff reviewed the Skagit MRC's project proposal for the upcoming grant, and asked for clarification on the primary goal and metrics. The primary goal of the Community Beach Seining project is to continue the seine sampling initiated at the Ship Harbor location in 2010 to provide a longer term fish database to help monitor the status of our marine resources. The secondary goal is to increase public awareness of the marine environment as well as increase the visibility of the MRC. The Committee discussed the different options for metrics for this project including: The completed data collection sheets, the volunteer sign-in

sheet with columns that shows the age and location where the volunteers are from, articles in the local paper, advertisements and press releases.

- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** Sasha said that the new grant will begin on September 16, 2013 after the current grant expires, and will extend through September 16, 2014. Erica asked if we could add Fidalgo Bay Day as a new task to the grant proposal with a budget of \$2,000. Tracy said that we could remove \$2,000 from the MRC Operations budget and move it the Fidalgo Bay Day task. Kari requested consensus from the Committee to revise the grant proposal to include Fidalgo Bay Day as a new task with a budget of \$2,000. The Committee unanimously approved this action.
- **MRC Grant Amendment:** The amendment is currently being routed for signatures. The expiration date will be extended from June 30, 2013 to September 16, 2013.
- **Future Funding:** Before approaching potential funders, Jay suggested that we ask ourselves, what would happen if the MRC operations or a particular project does not get funded? What are the repercussions? What is the immediate need? Paul suggested the MRC consider starting a fundraising campaign for particular projects and posting it on the Kickstarter website: <http://www.kickstarter.com/>. Kickstarter is a platform and resource for businesses, organizations, and individuals to pledge money towards a project. Project creators set a funding goal and deadline. If people like a project, they can pledge money to make it happen. Funding goals for projects must be met by their deadline or they won't receive any funding. It's all or nothing.
- **MRC Website:** Tracy reminded MRC members to provide bios and photos to post on the new website.
- **MRC Presentation:** Erica will provide the MRC presentation to the Board of County Commissioners on June 25, 2013 between 8:30 am and 10:00 am. Other MRC members are encouraged to participate and show support.
- **MRC Membership:** Ivar Dolph, who has been an active MRC member since 2000, recently submitted a letter of resignation. It is quite unfortunate to lose such a valued member of our organization. Ivar has been involved in and served as the project lead for many MRC projects including the Pigeon Guillemot surveys, the rapid shoreline inventories and Beach Watcher training, just to name a few. Ivar will be greatly missed. Kari stated that Ivar suggested contacting Morty Cohen to replace him on the MRC roster as the Beach Watcher representative. Kari will contact Morty to officially invite him to apply to become an MRC member. Tracy will send Morty an application. Charlie announced that he is planning to retire sometime this year and Julie Barber will take his place as the Swinomish representative. MRC members suggested having a potluck party to honor Ivar and Charlie. We are currently down to just nine voting members on the MRC. The Committee discussed the need to recruit a few new members to represent additional interest groups and bring fresh ideas and energy to the MRC. The awareness of the MRC isn't really out there, so we will need to work really hard to be more visible in the community.
- **Skagit MRC Sustainability Plan:** Tracy and Kari drafted and submitted the Skagit MRC Sustainability Plan to the Northwest Straits Foundation.
- **Oil Spill Preparedness and Response Grant:** The Foundation drafted a subcontract for Skagit MRC that is currently being routed for signature. The oil spill response informational workshop will likely take place in October. MRC members will be asked to help plan this event.
- **Ocean Frontiers (Film about Marine Stewardship):** We were unable to find a volunteer to plan and organize a special showing of this film. The Friends of Skagit Beaches decided it might be easiest to show it as an addition to the Beach Watcher winter lecture series. The lecture series are always well attended. The Skagit MRC and the Samish Indian Nation will still have an opportunity to help co-host the event.

#### **Project Status & Discussion:**

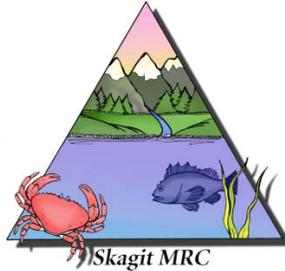
- **WSU Beach Watchers:** WSU plans to hire a full time Beach Watcher Coordinator for a period of one year to develop a statewide curriculum for Beach Watcher training and implement the training program in Skagit County. They will likely post the position sometime in July.
- **Native Oyster Restoration:** Paul distributed copies of the 2012 report. Paul will send an electronic copy to Tracy so that she can distribute copies of the report to the rest of the MRC members. 20 cultch bags were collected to monitor for post larvae recruitment from last year's spawning and settlement. Results show a moderate spawning set from last year. New cultch bags will be distributed and sampling will occur at the Fidalgo Bay Trestle in July.

- **Shannon Point Riprap Removal:** The Northwest Straits Foundation and the Shannon Point Marine Center's Board of Directors will make a visit to the project site next Thursday.
- **Bowman Bay Riprap Removal:** Still waiting for a signed grant agreement. Jay talked to Pete Haase about conducting forage fish surveys prior to construction in 2014.
- **NW March's Point Beach Nourishment:** Project is moving along. Erica talked to the property owners about moving the derelict boat ramp. The property owners requested we get approval from the refineries.
- **Community Beach Seining Days:** The next Community Beach Seining Day will take place Wednesday, June 19<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 pm at Ship Harbor next to the San Juan Ferry Terminal. Another Community Beach Seining Day will take place in August. Paul said that he obtained the collection permit which can also be used for Fidalgo Bay Day. Per collection permit requirements, we will need to properly sanitize the net after each event to prevent the potential spread of invasive species. Collecting and recording juvenile salmon would require an additional permit. If salmon are captured in the net we will not be able to record any measurements.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** Skagit Beach Watchers, Wayne Huseby and Lin Folsom, are organizing this year's Fidalgo Bay Day event. Erica Pickett is the MRC project lead. Fidalgo Bay Day will take place September 14 at the Fidalgo Bay RV Park.

**Miscellaneous Events and Announcements:**

- Nancy Olsen said that the Friends of Skagit Beaches Trail Tales interpretive walks have been well attended (18-24 people). There have been a lot of new faces joining the walks. It has been a really great opportunity to connect with the locals.
- Pete announced that the next Puget Sound Partnership Leadership Council meeting will be held at Padilla Bay on July 10-11. Pete plans to write up a report on the meeting that will be made available to folks who are interested.

**The meeting adjourned at 11:05 a.m. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, July 11, 2013, at the Skagit County Public Works building in the Skagit meeting room.**



# Skagit County Marine Resources Committee

Minutes of the July 11, 2013 meeting held at the Skagit County Administration Building

**Members Attending:** Tracy Alker, Erica Pickett, Jay Lind, Teri Switalski, Betsy Stevenson, Paul Dinnel, Julie Barber (Charlie O'Hara's alternate)

**Members Absent:** Christine Woodward, Kari Odden, Jim Ramaglia, Charlie O'Hara

**Others Attending:** Morty Cohen, WSU Beach Watcher; Nancy Olsen, citizen; Gary Stoyka, SCPW; Sharon Riggs, Padilla Bay NERR; Robyn du Pre, NWSF

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

**Minutes:** Approved

**Public Comments:** None

**Northwest Straits Foundation Update:** *Provided by Robyn du Pre, the NWSF Director*

- Robyn Du Pre introduced herself to the MRC and provided an update on the Northwest Straits Foundation. The Foundation serves as the non-profit extension that was established to help support the Northwest Straits Initiative by pursuing additional funding for its programs and projects that the Northwest Straits Commission is unable to pursue.
- The state legislature recently approved a bill that preserves funding for the next two years to help support the derelict vessel removal program. The bill was sponsored by State Representative Norma Smith, from Whidbey Island. There is also money in the state budget that has been earmarked for derelict gear removal throughout Puget Sound.
- The Northwest Straits Initiative's derelict gear removal program is using high tech resolution sonar scanners to detect and map derelict gear along the bottom of Puget Sound. Derelict crab pots have been a lower priority than derelict nets because there is less of an impact associated with them. Julie Barber said there was an interesting article in Nature magazine on the impact of derelict nets on marine birds. Robyn said that derelict nets have also negatively impacted the crabbing industry which has suffered a significant economic loss. So far approximately 5,000 nets have already been removed! Close to 1,000 derelict nets still remain in the high priority areas. They hope to complete the removal of derelict nets within the next two years. Luckily, there haven't been as many reports on new derelict nets in Puget Sound in recent years. But the question is, how well are the lost nets actually being reported? The data collected from the derelict gear is recorded in a database and shared with other researchers. It is also available on the NWSI derelict gear website: <http://www.derelictgear.org/>. Because the program has been such a huge success, the Foundation plans to add staff to help support the derelict gear program. The program has gotten a lot of publicity including a recent segment on the National Public Radio station. Many organizations from around the world are now using the NWSI's derelict gear program as a guideline for developing their own derelict gear removal programs.

- The NWSF partnered with the San Juan MRC to secure grant funding for oil spill preparedness and response. The Foundation is working with other MRCs located within the geographic scope, including Skagit MRC, to develop and coordinate oil spill informational workshops. The scope of the informational workshops will include communications, cleanup, what to expect, environmental impacts, who the responders are, and volunteer opportunities. The MRCs will help with the logistics and a small amount of funding will be provided to the MRCs to cover staff time. The Skagit MRC tentatively scheduled an oil spill informational workshop on January 18, 2014. In addition to the informational workshops, three counties (not including Skagit County) will also organize oiled wildlife response workshops and Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response (HAZWOPER) training.
- The NWSF is forming a new board that is separate from the NWSC. The board will consist of seven members, a representative from each county. The board members don't necessarily have to be MRC members. Ideally, they would have certain skill sets that would be beneficial to the Foundation such as legal or financial expertise. Robyn said that the Foundation would be happy to offer ideas for potential candidates to represent Skagit County on the board.
- Skagit MRC member, Jay Lind, inquired about potential training opportunities and tools for fundraising. Robyn said that the Foundation is working on developing a program and outreach materials to help MRCs with fundraising. The NWSF also plans to provide basic training to MRC members. A communications and outreach person will be hired in the fall.

#### **Northwest Straits Commission Report (NWSC):**

- NOAA is providing \$200k to the NWSC to help cover planning and administrative costs (not projects) for 18 months.
- The next Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference will be held April 30th–May 2nd, 2014 at the Washington Convention Center in Seattle. There is a call for proposals and posters.
- Caroline Gibson went to Washington D.C. for Capitol Hill Ocean Week to talk about the important work of the NWSI. Some of the topics included marine habitat protection and Marine Spatial Planning.
- The NWSF sent out a call for MRC Conference auction items. Funds raised will go towards the Foundation's work in support of helping MRCs plan, fund, and implement projects. Popular auction items include vacation getaway packages, guided trips, foods, crafts, and MRC gift baskets. The MRC Conference will be held on November 22-23 at the Bellingham Lakeway Inn.

#### **Administrative Report:**

- MRC Grant Reports: The MRC grant progress reports have been submitted. Tracy thanked MRC members for submitting their project updates and volunteer hours on time.
- MRC Grant Amendment: The grant amendment has been signed! The expiration date has been extended from June 30, 2013 to September 16, 2013 and will cover expenses for two Community Beach Seining Days and Fidalgo Bay Day.
- MRC Website: The draft MRC website design is ready for review. Tracy will forward the link to MRC members for comments. The draft design needs to be approved by early next week so we can move forward to the next step. Tracy reminded MRC members to provide bios and photos to post on the new website.
- MRC Presentation: Erica did an excellent job presenting the MRC's 2012 accomplishments to the Board of County Commissioners on June 25, 2013. The Commissioners expressed their support of our work and were impressed by the number of volunteers and hours contributed and the dollar amount we were able to leverage. Jay Lind was also there to show his support.
- MRC Membership: Morty Cohen submitted his application to become a new Skagit MRC member. Morty is an active Beach Watcher volunteer, is on the Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve Citizen Advisory Committee, and is a board member of the Friends of Skagit Beaches. His background is in pharmaceutical sciences. Tracy noted that there were enough MRC members present for a quorum to vote on Morty's membership. Betsy made a motion to appoint Morty as the newest MRC member and Jay seconded it. The Board of County Commissioners will need to sign the Resolution amending the MRC roster in order to make it official.

**Salish Sea Stewards Proposal Revisions:** The Skagit MRC's original proposal included a budget of \$13,000 to support the 100 hour WSU Beach Watcher training. However, WSU is now providing 100% funding for a full time Beach Watcher Coordinator to develop and implement the Beach Watcher training for a period of one year. The future and sustainability of the program is still very uncertain. The Skagit MRC decided that it is important to establish a more sustainable volunteer training program that will continue to help support MRC and partner projects. Nancy Olsen, the former Skagit Beach Watcher Coordinator, conducted an assessment of the WSU Beach Watcher program four years ago and discovered several issues with the existing program. In particular, Nancy encountered many community members who were interested in volunteer opportunities, but were unable to commit to the 100 hours of training and 100 hours of volunteer work that were required. There are currently no alternative portals for citizens to become involved in MRC and partner projects (besides individual contact). Nancy helped revise the MRC's Salish Sea Steward's proposal to meet the goals of the MRC and complement the WSU Beach Watchers training program. The intention of the Salish Sea Stewards Program is to:

- Attract new volunteers by offering a portal for involvement in marine – shore activities;
- Provide a more feasible alternative to the 100-hour (Beach Watcher) training;
- Streamline the process for volunteers to engage in established projects;
- Build capacity for the MRC to expand education, monitoring and restoration efforts;
- Expand the public awareness of the issues affecting Salish Sea health and the work that MRC and partners are doing;
- Develop partnerships with a vision of long term sustainability for the program

The MRC reviewed the revised proposal and discussed a few concerns regarding potential conflicts with the existing WSU Beach Watcher program. MRC members stressed the importance of coordinating with WSU Beach Watcher program and providing some kind of a link or transition between the programs. The consensus of the MRC was to approve the revised proposal. The Salish Sea Stewards program will involve working with a qualified consultant to develop and implement the ~20-40 hour volunteer training program, as a pilot program and alternative to the 100-hour WSU Beach Watcher training program. The consultant and MRC will work with WSU Beach Watchers to coordinate and combine training topics to avoid duplication or conflict between the programs. Approximately 10 – 20 volunteers will be trained in near shore ecology and conservation issues and engaged in actively contributing to the priority citizen science, restoration, and education projects of the MRC and partners. The program model will likely consist of different training levels and modules. Level One will provide a solid foundation on topics impacting our local marine resources. Level Two will offer a selection of more specific training in education and outreach, science, monitoring, and restoration. The volunteers will have the option of attending one or all of the trainings offered in Level Two. Level Three will direct volunteers to more specialized training for specific projects where the volunteers will have an opportunity to return their ~20 hours of service. The consultant will be retained for one year to develop and implement the program, provide volunteer coordination, and program evaluation.

**Beach Naturalist Training Proposal Revisions:** In addition to revising the Salish Sea Stewards proposal, Nancy also helped to revise and improve the metrics in the Beach Naturalist Training proposal. The Beach Naturalist Training will be included as one of the Salish Sea Stewards training modules. An evaluation plan will be built into the Salish Sea Stewards and Beach Naturalists programs during the development process. The goal of the Beach Naturalist Training proposal is to protect the delicate intertidal marine life at our local beaches by educating students and teachers on proper beach etiquette. The desired behavior change is for students to tread lightly, put overturned rocks back, wet their hands before touching animals, etc. Metrics will likely include observations, the number of participants, tests or surveys, educational materials, number of interactions, etc. The consensus of the MRC was to approve the revisions to the Beach Naturalist Training proposal.

#### **Project Status & Discussion:**

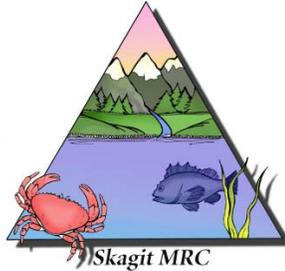
- **WSU Beach Watchers:** WSU posted the job announcement for the new Beach Watcher Coordinator. This is a full-time position for a period of one year. The Skagit Beach Watcher Coordinator will help develop and implement a statewide training curriculum for all Beach Watchers. They will begin screening applicants on July 22, 2013.
- **Native Oyster Restoration:** The oysters at the Fidalgo Bay Trestle restoration site will be monitored during the low tide series from approximately July 20 thru July 24 and will consist of collecting 1/4 meter sq. quadrat samples for oysters. The Swinomish recently planted oyster seed at new sites at the Lone Tree Point lagoon, Kiket Island lagoon, and Skagit Bay.

- **Community Beach Seining Days:** An estimated 50-60 people participated in the Community Beach Seining Day that took place in June. 19 volunteers (mostly Beach Watcher volunteers) had signed up in advance to help. The next Community Beach Seining Day will take place in August.
- **NW March's Point Beach Enhancement:** Erica and Joan will be meeting with the property owners and Tesoro on July 19<sup>th</sup>.
- **Shannon Point Riprap Removal:** No update.
- **Bowman Bay Riprap Removal:** The feasibility work is supposed to begin in July. The State Parks Department is looking for a place to put the rock once it is removed. The rock will have to be trucked out.
- **NW March's Point Beach Nourishment:** Project is moving along. Erica and Joan will be meeting with the property owners and Tesoro at the site on July 19<sup>th</sup> to talk about removing the boat ramp and beach nourishment.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** Planning continues. Fidalgo Bay Day will take place September 14 at the Fidalgo Bay RV Park.

**Miscellaneous Events and Announcements:**

- Taylor Shellfish-tival will take place on July 24, 2013 (11:00 am – 4:00 pm) at the Samish Bay Taylor Shellfish Farm. Erica Pickett will host the MRC display at the event. Children's activities at the MRC booth will include marine critter stamps and brittle star assembly with clay and pipe cleaners.
- Nancy Olsen announced that on July 18<sup>th</sup> the NOAA fisheries and partners will be at Taylor Shellfish Farm at 1:00 pm to deploy some new sampling equipment (a robotic sensor) which will assist in the monitoring of water quality in Samish Bay. Nancy said that the Trail Tales docents have arranged to have an outing to Taylors to learn more about this new equipment. They will also be taking a tour of the Shellfish Farm and a presentation from Nicole Hopper.

**The meeting adjourned at 11:10 a.m. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, August 8, 2013, at the Samish Indian Nation's Fidalgo Bay RV Park.**



# Skagit County Marine Resources Committee

Minutes of the August 8, 2013 meeting held at the Samish Indian Nation's Fidalgo Bay RV Park

**Members Attending:** Tracy Alker, Erica Pickett, Jay Lind, Betsy Stevenson, Paul Dinnel, Julie Barber (Charlie O'Hara's alternate), Christine Woodward, Morty Cohen

**Members Absent:** Kari Odden, Jim Ramaglia, Charlie O'Hara, Teri Switalski

**Others Attending:** Nancy Olsen, citizen; Sharon Riggs, Padilla Bay NERR; Pete Haase, volunteer; Wayne Huseby, volunteer; Ivar Dolph, former MRC member; Don McMoran, WSU Skagit Ext; Michael Grilliot, WA DNR; Kyle Murphy, WA DNR

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

**Minutes:** Approved

**Public Comments:** None

**DNR Aquatic Reserves Program:** *Provided by Kyle Murphy and Michael Grilliot*

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Aquatic Resources Division leases aquatic land, manages aquatic reserves, creosote piling removal, derelict vessel removal, nearshore habitat restoration, and wildstock geoduck harvest. They manage over 2.6 million acres of state owned aquatic lands (i.e. tidelands and bedlands). DNR established seven aquatic reserves including two in Skagit County: the Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve and Cypress Island Aquatic Reserve. The Cypress Island Aquatic Reserve was established in 2007. It encompasses over 4,000 acres of tidelands and bedlands. The Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve was established in 2008. It encompasses ~780 acres of tidelands and bedlands. Each aquatic reserve requires a management plan that: fosters water dependent use, ensures environmental protection, encourages public access and use, utilizes renewable resources, and has the ability to generate revenue. The primary focus is on environmental protection. The Cypress Island Aquatic Reserve Management Plan will need to be updated in 2017. The current management plan can be viewed online at: ([http://www.dnr.wa.gov/Publications/aqr\\_rsve\\_cyp\\_comp\\_pln\\_fn.pdf](http://www.dnr.wa.gov/Publications/aqr_rsve_cyp_comp_pln_fn.pdf)). The Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve Management Plan will need to be updated in 2018. The current management plan can be viewed online at: ([http://www.dnr.wa.gov/Publications/aqr\\_rsve\\_fid\\_mgmt\\_plan.pdf](http://www.dnr.wa.gov/Publications/aqr_rsve_fid_mgmt_plan.pdf)). The management goals for both of the aquatic reserves are to: conserve and enhance native habitats and associated plants and wildlife, protect and restore natural nearshore processes, and promote stewardship through education and outreach.

DNR works in cooperation with multiple partners and employs the Puget Sound Corps to help achieve the goals of the reserve management plans. Below are some of the highlights of DNR's work at the Fidalgo Bay and Cypress Island Aquatic Reserves:

- o **Forage Fish Spawning Surveys:** DNR is conducting surveys to identify critical spawning habitat for surf smelt and Pacific sand lance within the aquatic reserves. Data collected will be submitted to WDFW's Forage Fish Database. Although there is potential spawning habitat around Cypress Island, there is no documentation of forage fish spawning.

- Mussel Watch Expansion Program: Water quality monitoring is part of the management plan for the aquatic reserves. DNR sponsored two Mussel Watch sites at Cypress Island and one at Fidalgo Bay as part of WDFW's pilot expansion program in 2012. Mussels were deployed in cages in the aquatic reserves and later tested for over 100 contaminants. Samish Indian Nation's Department of Natural Resources staff helped to monitor the site at Fidalgo Bay. A report with the results will be out soon.
- Eelgrass Stressors: DNR is performing a study of contaminants in eelgrass in conjunction with the Mussel Watch study. Each eelgrass sampling site is paired with one of the mussel cages and tested for many of the same contaminants for comparison.
- SeagrassNet: DNR is participating in SeagrassNet (<http://www.seagrassnet.org/>), a global seagrass monitoring network to help identify the status, threats, and trends of this important marine ecosystem. DNR will continue mapping and monitoring eelgrass beds in both the Fidalgo Bay and Cypress Island Aquatic Reserves through 2013. The trend appears to be a significant deepening of the shallow and deep edges of the eelgrass beds in both aquatic reserves. Eelgrass reports can be found on DNR's website: <http://www.dnr.wa.gov/ResearchScience/AquaticMarineSciences/Pages/Home.aspx>. In 2014, DNR will reassess the need to continue funding eelgrass monitoring.
- Nearshore Habitat Restoration: In 2010 DNR partnered with Skagit River Systems Cooperative to restore forage fish spawning habitat at west March's Point using Texaco Restoration and Scott Paper Mill Damage Settlement funds. Monitoring results show signs of forage fish spawning.
- Marine Debris Removal: Over two tons of marine debris has been removed from all of the aquatic reserves. DNR is organizing a community beach cleanup at the Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve on Sunday, August 18<sup>th</sup>. Volunteers will meet at the Fidalgo Bay RV Park. The Skagit MRC agreed to be a partner for this cleanup event. Although no Skagit MRC committee members could help out the day of the event, the MRC will help advertise the event.
- Sediment Sampling: DNR will be collecting sediment samples in each aquatic reserve to establish a baseline in case of an oil spill or disaster to assess damages. They will target areas of high ecological, recreational, or commercial value to sample.
- Implementation Committee: An Implementation Committee will be established for the Cypress Island Aquatic Reserve in 2013 and the Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve in 2014. The Committee will help prioritize goals for the reserve and facilitate discussion about project collaboration.

#### **Northwest Straits Commission Report (NWSC):**

- Skagit County Commissioner Ron Wesen welcomed everyone to the county. He expressed his appreciation for the work of the NWSC and the MRCs and offered his support in any way he can. Ginny thanked the Commissioner for the County's continued support in financing the Skagit MRC staff.
- It is anticipated that the NWSC and MRC budgets are likely to remain at significantly lower levels than previous years. MRCs should try to leverage funding wherever possible. It is important to continue conversations with state legislators about the important work of the Northwest Straits Initiative and future funding needs. MRCs are encouraged to continue to submit priority project ideas.
- The Salish Sea Conference will be held April 30 – May 2, 2014. There is a call for presentation abstracts and posters. Caroline Gibson will be submitting presentation abstract on forage fish. MRCs are strongly encouraged to submit presentation abstracts. Abstracts are due October 1<sup>st</sup>.
- MRC members were asked to participate in an online survey for input on topics for the upcoming conference.
- Keeley O'Connell provided a presentation on the Coastal Blue Carbon Case Study project in Snohomish County. Her presentation can be viewed online: [http://earthcorps.org/ftp/ECScience/BlueCarbon/CoastalBlueCarbon\\_NWSC\\_7-26-13.pdf](http://earthcorps.org/ftp/ECScience/BlueCarbon/CoastalBlueCarbon_NWSC_7-26-13.pdf)

#### **Administrative Report:**

- MRC Grant Progress Reports: The MRC grant progress reports are due August 31. Please be sure to submit your volunteer, project updates, and invoices to Tracy.

- MRC Website: The website is now ready for posting text and photos. Please let Tracy know if you are interested in helping to post project information and photos.
- Skagit River Salmon Festival (Sept 7, 10 am – 6 pm): Betsy and Tracy will host the MRC booth. The event will take place at the Edgewater Park in Mount Vernon. If you are interested in helping out with the MRC booth, please contact Tracy.
- New MRC Grant Agreement (EPA funding through the Puget Sound Partnership): The draft agreement is currently being reviewed by Ecology. It cannot be fully executed until the current grant funding is finalized.
- Silent Auction Items for the MRC Conference in November: Please start thinking about items the Skagit MRC would like to donate to the MRC Conference silent auction. Betsy volunteered to try to get some local items for the gift basket. If you have any suggestions or items to donate to the gift basket please contact Tracy.
- Ocean Frontiers Screening Planning: The Friends of Skagit Beaches (FOSB) and the Skagit MRC are planning to co-host a showing of the “Ocean Frontiers” film. The film is informative and inspiring, providing a vision of how various interest groups can work together using a “bottom up” approach to solve specific issues impacting the ocean. To learn more about this film you can check out this website: <http://ocean-frontiers.org/the-film/>. Tracy also has a copy of the DVD if anyone is interested in viewing it. The Friends of Skagit Beaches would prefer to show the film in October. Tracy and Nancy Olsen would like to form a subcommittee to help plan the event. Betsy Stevenson volunteered to help. There are a lot of things the subcommittee will need to consider such as: Who is the audience we are trying to reach? What venue would be the most appropriate? What date, time, and event length would work best? Who should be the host/moderator? Should we have a panel discussion and who should be on it? What should the format be? Should we have a pre-show reception? Who should receive an official invitation? Do we want to solicit business sponsors/donations? Do we want to incorporate this film screening into a precursor of a larger future event? Please contact Tracy if you have any suggestions or if you would like to help plan this event.

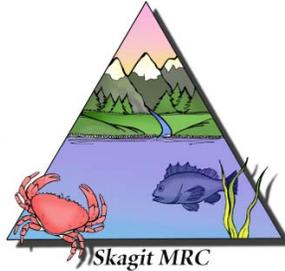
#### **Project Status & Discussion:**

- **WSU Beach Watchers**: WSU received applications from twelve qualified candidates for the new Beach Watcher Coordinator position. Interviews will take place in the next couple of weeks. They hope to have someone in place by September.
- **Native Oyster Restoration**: Finished field sampling in July. Results showed a decrease in oyster reproduction in Fidalgo Bay. This could be contributed to the fewer available oyster shell substrate or adult mortality. Paul met with Russel Barsh about transplanting native Olympia oysters at Lopez Island. Paul and one of his students will be presenting the Fidalgo Bay native oyster restoration work at a conference in Oregon in September.
- **Community Beach Seining Days**: The next Community Beach Seining Day will take place in August 15<sup>th</sup> at Ship Harbor in Anacortes.
- **Shannon Point Riprap Removal**: Coastal Geologic Services completed the draft feasibility report which is currently under review.
- **Bowman Bay Riprap Removal**: The Foundation is still waiting on the signed grant agreement.
- **NW March’s Point Beach Nourishment**: No update.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day**: Planning continues. Fidalgo Bay Day will take place September 14 at the Fidalgo Bay RV Park.

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

- The Friends of Skagit Beaches Trail Tales sign dedication will be held Wednesday, August 28<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 am at the Fidalgo Bay RV Park, Tommy Thompson Trail.
- Trail Tales interpretive walk “Fidalgo-The Bay That Feeds Us” will take place Wednesday, August 28<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 am at the Fidalgo Bay RV Park.

**The meeting adjourned at 11:10 a.m. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, September 12, 2013, at the Skagit County Administration building in Mount Vernon.**



# Skagit County Marine Resources Committee

Minutes of the September 12, 2013 meeting held at the Skagit County Administration Building in Mount Vernon

**Members Attending:** Kari Odden, Tracy Alker, Erica Pickett, Jay Lind, Teri Switalski, Julie Barber (Charlie O'Hara's alternate), Christine Woodward, Morty Cohen

**Members Absent:** Jim Ramaglia, Charlie O'Hara, Paul Dinnel, Betsy Stevenson

**Others Attending:** Kevin Anderson, DNR; Kristian Tollefson, DNR; Rebecca Williams, SFEG; Lucy Degrace, SFEG; Michelle Murphy, SFEG; Rachel Benbrook, NSEA; Nancy Olsen, citizen; Sharon Riggs, Padilla Bay NERR; Pete Haase, volunteer

**Call to Order and Introductions:** Kari Odden began the meeting at 9:10 a.m.

**Minutes:** Approved

**Public Comments:** None

**Citizen Action Training School:** *Provided by Rachel Benbrook*

The Regional Fisheries Enhancement Group has a new training program called Citizen Action Training School (CATS) that is funded by the Puget Sound Partnership for two years (through May 2015). CATS is a 12 week, 50 hour comprehensive training program that focuses on Puget Sound's watersheds/ecology and how citizens can become involved in the legal and regulatory processes that affect resource management. Classes will be held in Bellingham and Olympia this year. Both classes are full with over 30 students enrolled at each location. In 2014, classes will be held in Seattle, Everett, and the Olympic Peninsula. Some students will be allowed to take some of the sessions online. Upon completion of the training program, participants will give back at least 50 volunteer hours to plan and complete a service project related to one of three Puget Sound Partnership's Strategic Initiatives: 1) Prevention of Stormwater Pollution, 2) Protection/ Restoration of Habitat, 3) Recovery of Shellfish Beds. Students will be required to provide a project proposal and presentation to the class. Local mentors will be recruited and paired with students to help them with their service project. Rachel suggested MRC members become involved by spreading the word about the training and becoming mentors for service projects. Rachel recommends the MRC consider including the following as part of the Salish Sea Stewards training curriculum: provide a strong focus on regulatory processes and project planning, leadership training, hands on practice of civic engagement techniques, more communication training, and Puget Sound Partnership and Action Agenda training. For more information check out their website: <http://www.rfeg.org/cats/>, or contact Rachel at: [cats@n-sea.org](mailto:cats@n-sea.org).

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

- Two new Commission members have been appointed, Nan McKay and Diana Bob.
- The NWSC is still in the planning process of the MRC/NWSC Conference. They are looking for input from MRC members.

- Christine reminded MRC members to register for the Conference. The conference is by invitation only and is free to MRC members. Spouses can go, but will have to pay for dinner. Tracy reminded everyone that the County will reimburse Committee members for travel but not for hotel stay since the conference is in Bellingham.
- The Northwest Straits Foundation is requesting that the MRCs provide an updated project priority list so they can help seek funding.
- The Northwest Straits Foundation is hiring two new staff persons, a habitat restoration specialist and an outreach coordinator. They hope to have them in place by Oct 1<sup>st</sup>.

### **MRC Chair/Staff Meeting Report:**

- Sound IQ: Sound IQ is an online data sharing system originally developed by Island MRC with help from GIS expert Suzanne Shull and the City of Bellingham. To date, Sound IQ includes data from Island and San Juan MRCs. Jefferson MRC data is in the process of being incorporated. The plan is to incorporate data from all MRCs. Some of the other data layers include the WA Coastal Atlas and other agency data. Data can include documents, photos, and reports related to a particular area. There will likely be a Sound IQ training session at the MRC conference in November. Here is the link to the Sound IQ website: (<http://www.igmap.org/icSoundIQ/website/index.html>).
- Salish Sea Wiki: Paul Cereghino developed an information sharing website for work being done in the Salish Sea called Salish Sea Wiki. Here is a link to the website: [https://salishsearestoration.org/wiki/Salish\\_Sea](https://salishsearestoration.org/wiki/Salish_Sea). Paul works for NOAA and performs technical review for the Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Program & ESRP Grant (Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program). Anybody can sign up to add data and create and edit pages. Users must adhere to a social contract. Pages can contain text, links to files, images, videos, etc. This could be a good opportunity for MRCs to share info and increase visibility. Austin Rose has already posted some MRC and NWSI info on the website. Training to use this website will likely be combined with the Sound IQ training at the MRC conference.
- Increase Visibility of MRCs in Community: MRCs should set goals to increase visibility in the community. Decision makers look for a level of existence, so it helps when they see the MRC projects and events in the media. Hosting big events and contacting the media is a great way to connect to the local community and increase visibility especially when local officials, state reps, and tribal leaders are invited to attend. Information sharing and presentations to local organizations, clubs, schools, etc will also help increase awareness. Committee members agreed that some kind of identification would be helpful such as, ID badges, business cards, hats, t-shirts, etc. Kari volunteered to look into the costs for making hats. Pete Haase recommended improving the MRC display to increase visibility in the community by making it more interactive which will attract more people. Please contact Tracy with suggestions for improving the MRC display.
- Puget Sound Partnership's (PSP) Local Integrating Organizations (LIO's): Each LIO is set up a little differently. It is important for MRCs to participate and ensure MRC priorities are included. It's important to link our priorities with the PSP Action Agenda. Skagit County is the only one without an LIO. The PSP just hired Leah Kintner, the Ecosystem Recovery Coordinator and liaison for Skagit County. Tracy recently met Leah and provided her with information about the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative and the Skagit MRC. She has also been added to the MRC meeting notification distribution list. MRC members agreed that it would be a good idea to invite Leah to one of our meetings for a formal introduction.

### **Administrative Report:**

- Progress Reports: The MRC grant progress reports have been submitted. Tracy thanked the MRC members for reporting volunteer hours and providing project updates. The Fidalgo Bay Day and Community Beach Seining reports will be submitted sometime after Sept 16th.
- New MRC Grant: We received the contract agreement from Ecology yesterday. It will take at least three weeks to get signed. We can't sign other contracts for work funded by the grant until the grant agreement has been signed. We will need to make sure that our project reports show that the work we do under this grant agreement helps implements the Puget Sound Partnership's Action Agenda.
- Salish Sea Stewards Program: Morty suggested setting aside some time at our next MRC meeting to discuss the Salish Sea Stewards program before hiring a contractor. We will need

to decide what our goals are and how we want the program structured before we write up the contract.

- **MRC Conference Auction Items:** Betsy Stevenson has volunteered to put items for a basket together for the MRC Conference auction. She found someone to donate smoked salmon and a fresh braid of garlic. Please contact Betsy or Tracy if you have any suggestions for donations or would like to contribute to the gift basket. Kari Odden said that the Skagit Land Trust will likely donate note cards. Jay Lind is considering donating a weekend getaway to his cabin in Cornet Bay.
- **MRC Volunteer Appreciation:** The Committee discussed ideas for recognizing MRC members who are about to retire or who have recently retired. Unfortunately there are no funds available to purchase gifts for retiring members. Tracy said the County would be willing to provide plaques for volunteers. However, the Committee decided that MRC members would prefer a potluck instead of a plaque. If you would like to provide a few dollars towards a gift, or if you have any gift ideas, please contact Tracy.
- **Five Year Strategic Plan Update:** The Skagit MRC's Five Year Strategic Plan was last updated in 2008. We will need to set aside some time during one of our future MRC meetings to update the plan or form a subcommittee to get it started.
- **Ocean Frontiers Film Showing:** The Skagit MRC and the Friends of Skagit Beaches are co-hosting a showing of "Ocean Frontiers" on October 11<sup>th</sup> at the Northwest Education Service District building in Anacortes. Doors will open at 5:30 pm for a reception that will include light refreshments and a display of information from our partner organizations. The 60 minute film will start at 6:00 pm followed by a panel discussion and question and answer period. To learn more about the film or to watch the movie trailer, check out their website: <http://ocean-frontiers.org/>. Please try to attend to show your support.

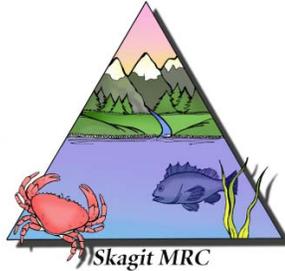
#### **Project Status & Discussion:**

- **WSU Beach Watchers:** Four qualified candidates for the new Beach Watcher Coordinator position have been interviewed. Hope to have someone in place by the end of September. The next Beach Watcher meeting will be held September 23.
- **Native Oyster Restoration:** No Update.
- **Community Beach Seining Days:** The next Community Beach Seining report will be complete soon.
- **Shannon Point Riprap Removal:** The feasibility report has been completed. The next phase will begin as soon as the new MRC grant funding becomes available.
- **Bowman Bay Riprap Removal:** No update.
- **NW March's Point Beach Nourishment:** No update.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** Fidalgo Bay Day will take place September 14 at the Fidalgo Bay RV Park.

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

- **DNR's Creosote Removal Program:** Kristian Tollefson announced that DNR has funding available to remove creosote in the North Puget Sound region. They are actively looking for marine debris removal projects particularly in areas that have a high accumulation of creosote treated material. Kristian can provide removal services, even on private property, through the Puget SoundCorps program, which includes labor and disposal. They are also interested in larger removal projects, as well, and are always looking for potential project partners. For more information, please contact Kristian at [kristian.tollefson@dnr.wa.gov](mailto:kristian.tollefson@dnr.wa.gov).
- **Salish Sea Shoreline Forum:** The Salish Sea Shoreline Forum, sponsored by the Puget Sound Partnership, will be held September 30<sup>th</sup> at the Tukwila Community Center. The focus will be on how to incentivize alternative green shoreline techniques. Space is limited, so you will need to register.

**The meeting adjourned at 10:55 a.m. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, October 10, 2013, at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort in Anacortes.**



# Skagit County Marine Resources Committee

Minutes of the October 10, 2013 meeting held at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort

**Members Attending:** Kari Odden, Tracy Alker, Erica Pickett, Jay Lind, Julie Barber (Charlie O'Hara's Alternate), Todd Woodard (Christine's Alternate), Morty Cohen, Charlie O'Hara, Paul Dinnel, Betsy Stevenson

**Members Absent:** Jim Ramaglia, Teri Switalski; Christine Woodward

**Others Attending:** Nancy Olsen, citizen; Sharon Riggs, Padilla Bay NERR; Pete Haase, volunteer; Ginny Broadhurst, NWSC; Sasha Horst, NWSC; Abigail Curtin, SCPW; Mike Sato, Sound Action

**Call to Order and Introductions:** Kari Odden began the meeting at 9:10 a.m.

**Minutes:** Approved

**Public Comments:** Mike Sato announced that Sound Action (formerly called Preserve our Islands), is looking into issues with the State's Hydraulic Code and the Hydraulic Project Approval (HPA) permit program. The Hydraulic Code and HPA program regulates construction work in and around state waters with rules that are supposed to protect fish, shellfish, and their habitat. After auditing eleven permits, they discovered several shortcomings and brought it to the attention of the WA Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). For example, they found that as long as there is no documentation of forage fish present at the project location, HPA permits tend to get pushed through. The audit results can be found on Sound Action's website: <http://soundaction.org/>. In light of these findings, WDFW has agreed to make some changes to the Hydraulic Code Rules. Information regarding the proposed updates is available on the WDFW website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/hpa/rulemaking/>. They will be accepting public comments on the proposed rule changes through Nov. 15. Seven public meetings have been scheduled to discuss the proposed changes to the Hydraulic Code rules. The first public meeting will be held October 17<sup>th</sup> 6:00 – 8:00 pm at the WDFW office in Mill Creek and October 24<sup>th</sup> in Olympia. Jay Lind said that he would try to attend the meeting in Mill Creek and report back to the MRC.

**Salish Sea Stewards Program:** The committee discussed the goals of the Salish Sea Stewards volunteer training program and who the target audience should be. In the past, many people have expressed interest in volunteering, but were unable to commit to the 100 hour weekday training for WSU Beach Watchers. In order to make the Salish Sea Stewards program available to a broader group of people, the committee agreed that it should require fewer hours of training (~20-40 hours) and should be offered in the evenings and weekends. Sharon Riggs suggested trying to recruit students from the environmental program at the Skagit Valley College because they are required to complete a certain number of hours on environmental projects. Abigail Curtin said they have a similar program for students at Western Washington University. Todd Woodard suggested modeling the Salish Sea Stewards training program after the Skagit Conservation District's Watershed Masters Training program. The classes take place in the evenings with some weekend field trips and give a broad overview of issues impacting our watersheds. After completing the Watershed Masters

Training, volunteers can sign up for various volunteer opportunities with different partner organizations. Tracy will get in touch with Kristi Carpenter to get more information about the program. It is important for the volunteers to get good solid background information relating to the priority work of the MRC and partners before working on actual projects. The Salish Sea Stewards training program could take place in phases, with the first phase providing a broad overview of issues impacting marine resources. The first phase of training would need to be completed by the early spring of 2014. The second phase of the program could provide additional training for specific projects, such as the Beach Naturalist program. Paul Dinnel suggested providing a way for Salish Sea volunteers to transition to become Beach Watchers once they complete 100 hours of training. The MRC will retain a consultant through the County process to develop the program and provide volunteer coordination. Morty suggested forming a subcommittee to provide input and oversight during program development. MRC members Tracy, Morty, Erica, and Jay, and Beach Watcher, Pete Haase, volunteered to be on the subcommittee. The subcommittee will meet next week.

**Northwest Straits Commission Report (NWSC):** Provided by Ginny Broadhurst

- The Washington legislature created the Washington Marine Resources Advisory Council, whose primary focus is on ocean acidification and making recommendations to address it. Governor Inslee recently appointed Christine Woodward, Chair of the Northwest Straits Commission, to participate on the Council.
- Meg Chadsey, WA Sea Grant Ocean Acidification Specialist, talked about the communications and socio-economic impacts of ocean acidification. Senator Cantwell is advocating for ocean acidification monitoring programs that could impact WA's economy.
- The Puget Sound Partnership Science Panel is working to improve and use the best available science and policy engagement for Puget Sound Recovery and will identify data gaps/needs. They are integrating the Northwest Straits Initiative projects such as: ocean acidification, kelp and eelgrass restoration, forage fish and shellfish restoration, water quality, and rockfish recovery.
- Caroline is working with a group of kelp experts to develop a regional monitoring project to protect kelp beds in the northern Puget Sound. It will likely be a great opportunity for MRCs and citizen scientists to get involved.
- Ginny reminded MRC members to register for the MRC Conference which will be held in Bellingham, November 22-23. The draft agenda is available on the NWSC website. Contact Michele at the Foundation to register. Friday morning session will include a field trip to one of Whatcom MRCs project sites. The poster session will be held Saturday at noon as a chance to share information. They are encouraging interactive displays. There will also be an "ignite" session which is a Power Point of 20 slides of images only, no text. The MRCs will select from two different themes:
  1. "Our MRCs most important accomplishment" or
  2. "Our MRCs niche in the community"

Christine Woodward has volunteered to do the ignite Power Point for Skagit MRC.

- NWSI is now on Facebook to try to connect to a broader audience. Please "Like" NWSI on Facebook and forward to your friends. Contact Sasha to post MRC news, photos, and activities on Facebook.

**Administrative Report:**

- New MRC Grant: We received the signed contract agreement from Ecology yesterday. Now we can start the contracting process for the Salish Sea Stewards/Beach Naturalists, Shannon Point Riprap removal, Bowman Bay Riprap Removal and Marine Shoreline Protection Assessment projects.
- MRC Conference Auction Items: Nancy Olsen donated a beautiful underwater photograph for the Skagit MRC gift basket. Thank you Nancy!
- Ocean Frontiers Film Showing: The Skagit MRC and the Friends of Skagit Beaches are co-hosting a showing of "Ocean Frontiers" on October 11<sup>th</sup> at the Northwest Education Service District building in Anacortes. Doors will open at 5:30 pm for a reception that will include light refreshments and a display of information from our partner organizations. The 60 minute film will start at 6:00 pm followed by a panel discussion and question and answer period. To learn more about the film or to watch the movie trailer, check out their website: <http://ocean-frontiers.org/>.

- **MRC Hats:** Kari Odden looked into costs for purchasing hats with the Skagit MRC logo embroidered on the front as a way to help increase MRC visibility and to help identify who we represent at special events. There will be a one time setup fee of \$65. To purchase 12 hats with the Skagit MRC logo it would cost \$18-\$22 each. The more hats purchased, the less expensive it would be. MRC members would have to be willing to purchase their own hats since we do not have any funds that we could use to pay for them. Ginny suggested contacting the Foundation to see if the Skagit MRC has any extra funds available to help purchase hats. Kari routed a sign-up sheet to see if there was enough interest from MRC members to purchase hats.
- **MRC Display:** Kari and Tracy had a meeting to discuss ideas for making the MRC more interactive to attract more people to the booth and increase awareness. Games with an educational twist seem to be the biggest draw. A tabletop Plinko style game and a beanbag toss game are the top two ideas being considered.
- **Volunteer Certificates of Appreciation:** Kari awarded Certificates of Appreciation and gave special recognition to retiring and recently retired MRC members including: Charlie O'Hara and Ivar Dolph. Kurt Buchanan and Rachel Benbrook also received certificates but were unable to attend the meeting. Thank you all for your years of service (Charlie -14 years, Ivar- 13 years, Kurt -3 years, and Rachel- 2 years)! Each one of you has been an important part of the Skagit MRC and you will be greatly missed. A volunteer appreciation potluck took place following the MRC meeting.

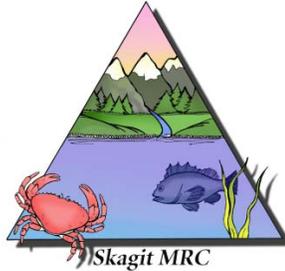
#### **Project Status & Discussion:**

- **WSU Beach Watchers:** A new Beach Watcher Coordinator has been hired and is scheduled start November 1. This full time position is fully funded by WSU for a period of one year. The Beach Watcher Coordinator will be tasked with developing a regional training program that is more consistent with the WSU standards.
- **Shannon Point Riprap Removal Feasibility Study:** Funding is now available to start the next phase. The contracting process between the County and the Foundation will soon be underway.
- **Bowman Bay Riprap Removal Feasibility Study:** The Northwest Straits Foundation's grant agreement has been signed. The contracting process between the County and the Foundation will soon be underway.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** Fidalgo Bay Day (FBD) took place September 14<sup>th</sup> at the Fidalgo RV Resort. Over 200 people attended the event. Highlights included the Shannon Point Marine Center touch tank, a beach seining demonstration, forage fish survey demonstration, Samish Indian Nation canoe rides, a 26' fiberglass salmon that kids could crawl into, children activities, educational booths, free samples of chowders and shellfish, and a traditional salmon lunch. This event couldn't have taken place without the help of our sponsors, 31 partners and 52 volunteers. The FBD project report is now complete.
- **Native Oyster Restoration:** Seeding took place in Padilla Bay about a month ago. Permitting issues have delayed oyster shell distribution in Fidalgo Bay. One of Paul Dinnel's students gave a presentation on native oyster restoration in Fidalgo Bay at the annual Pacific Coast Shellfish Growers Association/ National Shellfish Association (Pacific Coast Section) conference in Oregon.

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

- **Salish Sea Shoreline Forum:** Jay Lind attended the Salish Sea Shoreline Forum, sponsored by the Puget Sound Partnership, on September 30<sup>th</sup> at the Tukwila Community Center. The focus was on how to incentivize alternative green shoreline techniques.

**The meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, November 14, 2013, at the Skagit County Administration Building in Mount Vernon.**



# Skagit County Marine Resources Committee

Minutes of the November 14, 2013 meeting held at the Skagit County Administrative Building in Mount Vernon

**Members Attending:** Kari Odden, Tracy Alker, Erica Pickett, Jay Lind, Charlie O'Hara, Paul Dinnel, Betsy Stevenson, Christine Woodward, Morty Cohen

**Members Absent:** Jim Ramaglia, Teri Switalski

**Others Attending:** Nancy Olsen, citizen; Pete Haase, volunteer; Joan Drinkwin, NWSF; Lisa Kaufman, NWSF; Michael See, SCPW; Catherine Buchalski, WSU Beach Watcher Coordinator; Phyllis Bravinder, Beach Watcher;

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

**Minutes:** Approved

**Public Comments:** None

**Northwest Straits Commission Report (NWSC):** Provided by Christine Woodward

- **Society for Ecological Restoration's Conference:** Christine attended the Society for Ecological Restoration's 2013 World Conference that was held October 6-11 in Wisconsin. It brought together restoration professionals, researchers, and students from diverse backgrounds from all over the world. The Samish Indian Nation produced a [video](#) about Cypress Island that was presented at the conference and can also be viewed on their website.
- **Washington Marine Resources Advisory Council:** Christine and Ginny will attend the first Washington Marine Resources Advisory Council meeting in Olympia next Thursday to discuss ocean acidification.
- **Meeting With State Legislatures:** Jerry Masters will start meeting with state legislatures to seek support and funding for the important work of the Northwest Straits Initiative and MRCs.
- **Beach Cleanup Work for Military Vets:** Washington legislature authorized funding for the Washington Conservation Corps to hire crews of recently retired military veterans for marine debris survey and removal work.
- **LIDAR Survey Opportunities With Ecology:** George Kaminsky from the Department of Ecology is looking to the Northwest Straits Initiative to help identify shoreline sites to include in their new LIDAR survey project. The project involves collecting boat-based high-resolution topographic LIDAR data along beaches and bluffs as well as multibeam bathymetry (3-D benthic substrate maps) across the nearshore platform. Data collected will be used to assess beach and nearshore ecosystem health, and assess the effects of shoreline armoring and restoration projects in conjunction with sediment supply and sea-level rise.
- **Forage Fish Spawning Habitat Survey Training:** Caroline has been meeting with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Department of Natural Resources

regarding forage fish spawning surveys. She would like to offer free training to MRC volunteers on forage fish survey protocols sometime between January and March.

- New Northwest Straits Foundation Employees: The Northwest Straits Foundation hired Lisa Kaufman as the new nearshore habitat restoration specialist and Jill Clark as the new director of education and outreach.
- MRC Conference/Ignite Power Point Presentation: Christine volunteered to do the ignite Power Point presentation for Skagit MRC at the MRC conference next week. The “ignite” session is a Power Point of 20 slides of images only, no text. The theme is “Our MRCs niche in the community.” The committee reviewed photos to recommend the best ones to use to tell our story.

**EcoNet Update:** Erica reported that the EcoNet committee is considering using the Puget Sound Partnership’s block grant funds to fund Storming the Sound, a one day conference for environmental educators in the north Puget Sound region. The EcoNet committee will be reviewing proposals and making a final decision at the potluck meeting, December 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Fidalgo Bay Nearshore Monitoring Workshop Report**, presented by Joan Drinkwin

As part of the Skagit Restoration Initiative, the Skagit MRC and the Northwest Straits Foundation hosted the Fidalgo Bay Nearshore Monitoring Workshop on Wednesday, October 24<sup>th</sup>, at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort. The ultimate goal is to develop and implement a long-term monitoring program to understand the status and trends of the health of the nearshore in Fidalgo Bay. The workshop was organized by Abbey Curtin, an intern with Skagit County Public Works. Workshop attendees included environmental professionals and citizen groups who are currently doing work in Fidalgo Bay. The workshop primarily focused on four objectives:

- **Objective 1:** *Understand who is monitoring what in Fidalgo Bay and what questions are being answered with this monitoring.*
- **Objective 2:** *Understand what questions remain to be answered about the health of the nearshore in Fidalgo Bay.*
- **Objective 3:** *Understand how those outstanding questions will be answered through additional monitoring or data analysis.*
- **Objective 4:** *Provide the MRC and other partners with information to move forward with development and implementation of long term monitoring to understand status and trends of the health Fidalgo Bay.*

The current monitoring work was divided up into different categories: Biological monitoring, physical monitoring, water quality monitoring, and toxicant monitoring. The following research questions and information needs were identified by workshop participants:

- Status and trends:
  - Update eelgrass surveys
  - Expand existing intertidal monitoring (including invasive species surveys) to sites outside of weaverling spit
  - Inventory shoreline armoring and conduct periodic surveys
- Biological monitoring:
  - Regular scientifically based beach seining for nearshore fish use
  - Bird surveys and review existing data
  - Shellfish surveys and review existing data
- Physical Monitoring:
  - Elevations and beach profiles at restoration sites
  - Effects of replacing the trestle
    - Circulation modeling
    - Particle tracking
    - Habitat mapping
- Toxicant and Water Quality Monitoring:
  - Background levels, presence, and ecosystem effects
- Specific Research Questions for Ocean Acidification and Sea Level Rise
  - Olympia Oyster connectivity and response to ocean acidification
    - Chemical tagging
    - Population genetics
    - Particle tracking
  - Zooplankton and phytoplankton and response to ocean acidification

- Regular sampling schedule
- Targeted sampling for events such as reproductive windows, storm events, and restoration projects

A spreadsheet was created to integrate a list of current projects with work that has already been done in Fidalgo Bay. Joan noted that it is important to identify where the data gaps are, what questions we are trying to answer, and how the data is going to be used. The workshop report will be finalized in a couple of weeks. The Skagit Restoration Initiative (SRI) subcommittee will review the report and come up with recommendations for the Skagit MRC's long-term monitoring plan for Fidalgo Bay and identify potential opportunities for future collaboration. The SRI subcommittee members include: Christine, Paul, Erica, Jay, Morty, and Tracy. Once the long-term monitoring plan has been adopted by the MRC, it will be shared with the rest of the workshop attendees and other interested parties.

#### **Administrative Report:**

- **MRC Contracts:** A Request for Proposals was sent out to several consultants in the County's consultant roster for the Salish Sea Stewards program. Nancy Olsen was the only one who responded. After evaluating Nancy's proposal, the subcommittee agreed that she was well qualified and was selected to do the work. A contract agreement with Nancy is currently underway. We've also started the contracting process for the Shannon Point Riprap removal, Bowman Bay Riprap Removal and Marine Shoreline Protection Assessment projects.
- **MRC Conference:** Erica, Christine, and Paul will be presenting Skagit MRC's nearshore restoration projects at the MRC conference. Betsy is putting together the MRC basket for the silent auction with items that she donated as well as items donated by Paul Dinnel, Nancy Olsen, Kari Odden/the Skagit Land Trust, and Tracy Alker.
- **Certificate of Appreciation:** A Certificate of Appreciation for Lori Kyle was signed by all of the MRC members. Lori was unable to attend the MRC meeting so Jay volunteered to take it to her. Lori served 12 years on the Skagit MRC as a representative of the Skagit Conservation District. Lori was the project lead for several projects including: Low Impact Development workshops, the forage fish interpretive signage, the Lone Tree pocket estuary restoration project, and the carwash kits. She also served as the Skagit MRC Chair for two years. Lori was an important part of the Skagit MRC and will be greatly missed.

#### **Project Status & Discussion:**

- **WSU Beach Watchers:** Morty introduced Catherine Buchalski, the new WSU Beach Watcher Coordinator. Catherine is a recent graduate of the Integrated Coastal Ecosystem Science, Policy and Management M.S. program at the University of New Hampshire. She has experience working at the National Estuarine Research Reserve in Texas and Florida. Catherine started her new position with WSU on November 1, and has been tasked with developing a regional training program that is more consistent with the WSU standards. Her full-time position is entirely funded by WSU for a period of one year.
- **Salish Sea Stewards:** Contract between the County and Nancy Olsen is underway. Training will be approximately 40 hours and will take place in the evenings and weekends in the spring of 2014, followed by project specific training. The consultant will coordinate with other volunteer organizations, like WSU Beach Watchers, to look for opportunities to join efforts in training and avoid program duplication.
- **Shannon Point Riprap Removal Feasibility Study:** Funding is now available to start the next phase to complete the feasibility study, project design, and permits, with Coastal Geologic Services. The contracting process between the County and the Foundation is underway. Joan said that Ecology offered to give the Skagit MRC \$14,000 that recently became available for restoration work. The \$14k is part of a fine that was issued for a barge that dumped a bunch of gravel for a remediation project at Guemes Island. Joan suggested that the money be used towards construction at Shannon Point. Construction will likely cost \$100 - \$200k, so we will need to seek additional funding for construction.
- **Bowman Bay Riprap Removal Feasibility Study:** The contracting process between the County and the Foundation is underway. The Northwest Straits Foundation hired Lisa Kaufman as the new nearshore restoration specialist. Lisa will be the project manager for the Bowman Bay riprap removal project. Pete Haase said that December through February would be the best time to survey the beach for surf smelt. The committee agreed that it would be a good idea to get ahead and start monitoring for surf smelt now to get good baseline data. Lisa

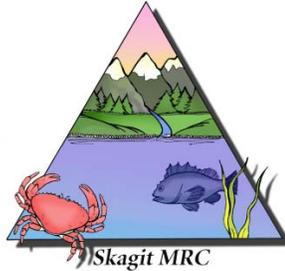
noted that we should also plan to survey the adjacent properties as well. Jay will talk to Jack Hart from the Parks Department to make sure it would be okay to survey and to find out if any permits would be required. Joan will talk to Dan Penttila and look into other options for analyzing the samples that are collected (if any).

- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** Erica said that there might be some additional funding available for Fidalgo Bay Day from a private sponsor. She asked the committee about the possibility of using the money for chowder since we were unable to get any chowder this year. The committee agreed that this was a good use of funds, but we should also consider using the funds for purchasing meals for volunteers, or for additional advertising for the event. Before any final decisions could be made, the committee decided they would like to know who the sponsor is first and how much funding they are willing to provide.
- **Native Oyster Restoration:** 50cy of oyster shell was deployed on the eastern side of Fidalgo Bay in the flats between the trestle and Crandall Spit. The work was funded through a contract between the Puget Sound Restoration Fund and Northwest Straits Foundation. Post monitoring and mapping will occur at low tide next Monday.

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

- **Puget Sound Ecosystem Monitoring Program's Shoreline Monitoring Toolbox-** Interested MRC members can attend the meeting in Seattle or via WebEx on November 19<sup>th</sup>, 1:00 – 3:30 pm.
- **Secret Harbor Restoration-** Lisa announced that DNR is 90% done with the Secret Harbor restoration work at Cypress Island. The restored estuary, formerly a ballpark, is functioning great! The estuary is now providing important habitat for many species of fish and birds.
- Nancy announced that the Trail Tales group is meeting with the Port of Anacortes at Wyman's Marina today at 2:00 pm to learn about the restoration project in Guemes channel. MRC members are welcome to come.

**The meeting adjourned at 11:08 a.m. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, December 12, 2013, at the Fidalgo Bay RV resort in Anacortes.**



# Skagit County Marine Resources Committee

Minutes of the December 12, 2013 meeting held at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort in Anacortes

**Members Attending:** Kari Odden, Tracy Alker, Erica Pickett, Jay Lind, Julie Barber, Paul Dinnel, Betsy Stevenson, Todd Woodward (Christine's Alternate), Morty Cohen, Teri Switalski

**Members Absent:** Jim Ramaglia, Christine Woodward

**Others Attending:** Nancy Olsen, citizen; Pete Haase, volunteer; Catherine Buchalski, WSU Beach Watcher Coordinator; Kasey Bolles, Ecology; George Kaminsky, Ecology; Sharron Riggs, Padilla Bay NERR; Leah Kintner, PSP; Sam Barr, Samish Tribe

**Call to Order and Introductions:** Kari Odden began the meeting at 9:00 a.m.

**Minutes:** Approved

**Public Comments:** None

**Northwest Straits Commission Report (NWSC):** No report. The NWSC meeting did not take place in November because of the MRC/NWSC conference. The next NWSC meeting will be held Friday, December 13, 2013.

## **Administrative Report:**

- **MRC Contracts:** Still waiting to get contracts signed for the Shannon Point Riprap Removal and Bowman Bay Riprap Removal projects, the Marine Shoreline Protection Assessment project, and the Salish Sea Stewards program.
- **Grant Progress Reports:** Due January 10<sup>th</sup>. Please be sure to report your volunteer hours, any matching funds, and project updates.
- **Oil Spill Preparedness Workshop:** The Northwest Straits Foundation and Skagit MRC are hosting an oil spill preparedness workshop on Saturday, January 18<sup>th</sup> at Padilla Bay.
- **Reminder:** MRC Officer Elections will be held in January! Start thinking about who you would like to nominate. You can even nominate yourself!

**EcoNet Update:** Erica reported that the EcoNet committee had a potluck meeting on December 4<sup>th</sup>. EcoNet has an event calendar for all events. Erica recommended the MRC post events such as Fidalgo Bay Day on the EcoNet event calendar.

## **Project Status & Discussion:**

- **WSU Beach Watchers:** The next Beach Watcher meeting will be held Friday, December 13<sup>th</sup>. Catherine Buchalski said that the planning for the WSU Beach Watchers regional training program is underway. Although nothing has been finalized, it will most likely be more like a WSU Master Naturalist program. The core training will be offered online in the form of different training modules. Participants will be eligible for training reimbursement if they contribute

volunteer hours to help with other citizen science projects. There are still a lot of unanswered questions, particularly about the future coordination of Beach Watcher volunteers. Catherine hopes to have more answers in January. In the meantime, Catherine has been working with Nancy Olsen to look for opportunities for combining some of the WSU Beach Watcher training with the MRC's Salish Sea Stewards training.

- **Salish Sea Stewards:** Waiting for a signed contract agreement with Nancy Olsen. The subcommittee will meet with Nancy, following the MRC meeting, to discuss the program development.
- **Shannon Point Riprap Removal Feasibility Study:** Jim Johansson with Coastal Geologic Services is currently working on the feasibility study. Paul, Tracy, Lisa Kaufman, Joan Drinkwin, and Jim Johansson, met with Gary Robinson with the City of Anacortes, to discuss what the City would like to do with the rock riprap. The Foundation recently received \$14,000 from Ecology, as part of a damages settlement for a barge that dumped gravel off of Guemes Island, which will be used towards the rock removal. The total cost for rock removal will likely cost around \$200k, so the Foundation will be looking for additional funding. If enough funding is secured, construction will take place in 2015.
- **Bowman Bay Riprap Removal Feasibility Study:** Lisa and Joan from the Northwest Straits Foundation met with Jack Hartt from WA Parks, Tracy and Jay, and potential contractors at the Bowman Bay project site. The contractors who submitted qualifications/proposals will be evaluated tomorrow. The final feasibility report is due March 31, 2014. The WA Parks Department is seeking a permit to collect forage fish spawning data, and other baseline data. Pete Haase and some of the other trained volunteers will continue conducting observational surveys for forage fish, but won't actually take samples until the permit is secured.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** No date has been set for the 2014 event.
- **Native Oyster Restoration:** 50cy of oyster shell was deployed on the eastern side of Fidalgo Bay in the flats between the trestle and Crandall Spit and 6000 oyster seed was planted. The work was funded through a contract between the Puget Sound Restoration Fund and Northwest Straits Foundation. Monitoring will occur in the spring and summer during low tide.
- **Community Beach Seining:** Will occur in June and possibly August, but no date has been set.
- **NW March's Point Beach Enhancement:** We are still waiting for a signature from the landowners before we can move forward.
- **Marine Shoreline Protection Assessment:** The Skagit Land Trust will use existing information to identify and map high priority areas for protection.

#### **Puget Sound Partnership, presented by Leah Kintner**

- **Leah Kintner's background:** Leah Kintner is the Puget Sound Partnership's (PSP) new Ecosystem Recovery Coordinator for Skagit County. Leah's background is in nautical and social science with a focus on conservation. She received her Master's in Conflict Resolution. Leah started working for the PSP in July and has been assigned to work in the Skagit watershed. She is still meeting folks and learning where the needs are.
- **Local Integrating Organizations:** Skagit County is the only county that does not have a Lead Integrating Organization (LIO). Although LIOs aren't required, they do provide a forum for different organizations to collaborate and communicate local priorities and identify common goals, and incorporate them into the PSP Action Agenda for funding. Leah said that not having an LIO in Skagit County makes a collaborative approach to communicating local priorities a little more challenging. Leah meets regularly with the Watershed Councils, from across the Puget Sound region. Richard Brocksmith is the new Executive Director of the Skagit Watershed Council, the dedicated Lead Entity for Skagit County under Chapter 77.85 RCW Salmon Recovery. Leah recommended inviting Richard to MRC meetings and opening up communications with the Skagit Watershed Council.
- **Puget Sound Partnership's (PSP) Action Agenda Update:** The Action Agenda will be updated in 2014. The PSP's 2013 State of the Sound Report, a biennial report on the recovery of Puget Sound, is now available online. There are 21 vital signs or indicators that are used to track the status of ecosystem restoration progress in Puget Sound. Although some of the vital signs are showing improvement such as shellfish beds, swimming beaches and estuaries, many of the vital signs continue to struggle. Three of the vital signs are even showing a worsening trend such as orcas, spawning herring stocks, and marine water quality. Salmon populations are also far from meeting federal recovery goals. Unfortunately, some of these

indicators may be responding to multiple pressures and natural causes that we cannot control. Progress towards Puget Sound recovery has been slow which is why it is more important than ever to improve the communications and collaboration with all of the other organizations who are involved in this effort.

**Ecology's LiDAR Survey Project, *presented by George Kaminsky***

The Department of Ecology recently received funding to collect LiDAR data along high priority beaches and bluffs across the nearshore platform and is looking for partners to help identify shoreline sites. The primary focus will be on feeder bluffs and high energy beaches to measure the rate of sediment supply compared to the rate of erosion and slope stability. They would also like to compare the high energy beaches with other areas. Boat-based high-resolution topographic LiDAR data as well as multibeam bathymetry (3-D benthic substrate maps) will be collected. Photo documentation software will be used in conjunction with the LiDAR data, to measure slope stability, overhanging vegetation and large woody debris. It will also be used to classify data points like artificial versus natural materials, but it can't read flat surface areas like roads. Data collected will be used to assess beach and nearshore ecosystem health, restoration projects and potential impacts of installing or removing shoreline armoring in conjunction with sediment supply and sea-level rise. It will also be used to assess what is impeding sediment supplies or affecting the sediment supply rates and the erosion rates of feeder bluffs.

**Miscellaneous Events and Announcements:**

No Announcements

**The meeting adjourned at 11:10 a.m. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, January 9, 2013, at the Skagit County Administration Building in Mount Vernon.**