



SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the August 9, 2018, Skagit County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) meeting, held at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort

Attendees:

- **MRC Members Attending:** Jay Lind, Paul Dinnel, Tracy Alker, Sarah Tchang, Pete Haase, Lynne Jordan, Phyllis Bravinder, Nathan Biletznikoff; Betsy Stevenson; Todd Woodard
- **MRC Members Absent:** Matt Reynolds, Julie Barber, Jamey Selleck, Jude Apple, Rachel Best
- **Others Attending:** Annie Kent, SCPDS; Dan McCarty, SCPW; Bridget Trosin, WA Sea Grant; Craig Olson, Citizen

Call to Order and Introduction: Paul Dinnel called the meeting to order at 10:35 a.m. and opened the meeting with introductions.

Approval of Minutes: June 14 and July 18, 2018, MRC meeting minutes were approved as written.

Public Comments: Craig Olson thanked the MRC for all of the great work that the group does. Pete expressed his appreciation for Craig's microscopy skills and thanked him for setting up his really cool microscope to help with the Kids on the Beach field session.

WA Sea Level Rise Projections and Communications: *Bridget Trosin, WA Sea Grant*

Sea level rise will likely intensify shoreline and coastal bluff erosion, storm surge, flooding, and saltwater intrusion. The three-year Washington Coastal Resilience Project (WCRP) is a collaborative effort to ramp up the state's preparedness for these coastal hazards. The project involves multiple partners from state and local government agencies, academic institutions and nonprofit organizations lead by Washington Sea Grant and the WA Department of Ecology. WCRP is primarily funded by a grant from the NOAA Regional Coastal Resilience Grants Program. Unlike other sea level rise projections that have been done in the past, WCRP has produced hi-resolution projections specific to Washington, factoring in sea level rise and vertical land movement. In addition, because the amount of sea level rise depends on how much and how quickly atmospheric greenhouse gases cause the earth system to warm, and how sensitive each process contributing to sea level rise is to that warming, WCRP has developed a separate set of projections for two greenhouse gas scenarios. Projections have now been developed for 171 locations along Washington's coastline. Results show that by 2100, projections for all greenhouse gas scenarios indicate a high likelihood of a sea level rise increase of at least 1.5 feet at the low end, with the potential for an increase in sea level rise of more than 8 feet at the upper end of the distribution.

Bridget's role in this project is to provide coastal communities (e.g. businesses, homeowners, and County and City planners) with better guidance and tools to help them understand these complicated projections so that they can make informative management decisions to become better prepared and more resilient to sea level rise. Bridget is meeting with MRCs to try to get a better understanding of local concerns with sea level rise, and identify who in the community may be most impacted, which community leaders are engaged in this topic, where the biggest hurdles are for addressing sea level rise, and what we can do to help address those hurdles. MRC members participated in a "Message Box" work session. Feedback from the MRCs will be used to develop key messages to better communicate sea level projections and potential impacts and produce outreach materials to meet specific local needs. It will also be used to help develop ideas for additional workshops that could help empower other organizations and community leaders in preparing for sea level rise. Bridget will follow-up with individual MRC members who are interested in getting more involved in this process. Tracy will forward Bridget's power point presentation to MRC members. For more information about WCRP go to:

www.wacoastalnetwork.com/washington-coastal-resilience-project.

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

- **NWSC 5-Year Strategic Plan:** Lucas is gathering input from the NWSC and all of the MRCs before finalizing the 5-Year Strategic Plan. He presented the draft Plan at the joint MRC meeting in July with Skagit, Whatcom, and Island County MRCs.
- **NWSC Marine Program Manager Position:** There were 41 applicants. Interviews will be held mid-August. Decisions will be made soon.

- Net Ecosystem Improvement Project: The NWSC decided to change the name of the “Net Ecosystem Improvement” project to “Actions to Impacts” to help better communicate the work of the MRCs.
- Presentation by Kirsten Feifel, Department of WA Department of Natural Resources (WA DNR): WA DNR shared the results of a recent survey sent to key stakeholders in Puget Sound. The goal of the survey was to identify common concerns and priorities regarding our state’s marine waters and ways to improve communication and coordination among partners to link to broader efforts.
- Next NWSC Meeting: The next Commission meeting will be held Friday, August 24 in Bellingham from 9am-3pm. Meetings are open to the public.

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

- NWSF Foundation Board Meetings: Board meetings are held each month. Anne Murphy was elected as the new president at the June meeting. The next meeting will be held August 28.
- Kukatali Preserve Restoration Project: The Northwest Straits Foundation is providing some grant funding that was left over from the Shannon Point Restoration project to help support the Swinomish Tribe’s Kukatali Preserve Restoration project. Construction to remove the boulders and roadway is now underway. When complete, water will be allowed to move between Similk Bay and Kiket Bay during high tide and the new tombolo beach will provide habitat where forage fish can lay their eggs. Volunteers helped with the pre-construction monitoring including beach wrack, large woody debris, and forage fish surveys. Monitoring will continue after construction is complete.

MRC Administrative Report: *Tracy Alker*

- MRC Presentation to the Board of County Commissioners- Aug 7: Tracy, Paul, and Pete provided an update to the Board of County Commissioners. The presentation highlighted the NWSI’s animated film “Engaging Conservation Leaders-Northwest Straits Initiative”, the Olympia Oyster Restoration project, the role of citizen scientists, and the Kids on the Beach project. The presentation was well received by the Commissioners. The Commissioners were also provided with copies of the 2017 Skagit MRC Annual Report and the 2017 NWSI Annual Report.
- 2018 MRC Conference - Ignite Presentation: One of the planned sessions at the MRC conference this year is the MRC Ignite Presentation. The ignite presentations consist of 20 slides, mainly image/graphics with limited text, and they automatically advance every 15 seconds. Presentations should focus on a single project or theme and include highlights, milestones, and major accomplishments where possible. An MRC member will need to take the lead on this.
- MRC Conference Accommodations: Tracy reminded MRC members that if they are interested in reserving a house at Fort Worden they can use the [online system or by calling reservations](#). If there are several MRC members who are interested in sharing a house at Fort Warden, Tracy offered to help coordinate group reservations for accommodations. So far Phyllis is the only Skagit MRC member who has expressed interest in sharing a house. There are several other options for hotels in Port Townsend that offer per diem rates in Port Townsend. MRC members are responsible for making their own hotel arrangements, but will get reimbursed for the hotel and travel at the government per diem rate. Just be sure to provide copies of your invoice as well as a photo copy of the credit card that was used.
- MyCoast App-Statewide Launch: The MyCoast smartphone app that Snohomish MRC uses will be launching statewide in September. The expansion is being led by the WA Dept of Natural Resources (DNR). A steering committee has also been formed to help manage the app, its tools, and outreach efforts. That team includes USGS, WA Sea Grant, DNR, and the NWSC. The MyCoast app includes five different reporting tools: abandoned boat, creosote piling, storm surge, king tide and beach photos. With the statewide launch of the app, other interested MRCs now have the opportunity to select beaches to include in the reporting tool. The products of that campaign will be made available to all MRCs. Skagit MRC will need to decide if we want to participate in the expansion. If so, we need to identify one MRC member to serve as the point of contact for ongoing communications about the app, and ideally have at least one location in our county to include in the beach photo reporting tool before the statewide launch. Sasha said that she’d be happy to host a WebEx to bring those interested members together and share more detailed information. For more information about the MyCoast App, go to: <https://mycoast.org/wa>.
- County Clean Water Facebook Page: We’ve been invited to feature MRC projects on the Clean Water Facebook page. It’s a great way to promote our work and special events. They have over 560 followers now, and the page keeps growing! Karen Dubois offered to work directly with individual MRC members to post information: www.facebook.com/skagitcountycleanwater/.

Project Status & Discussion

- Salish Sea Stewards- Pete Haase: The new Salish Sea Stewards graduates are helping with a wide variety of programs including Skagit MRC's forage fish surveys, Olympia oyster restoration and kelp surveys. The Salish Sea Stewards Planning Committee recently held a meeting to discuss the best options for running the program in 2019. The next Salish Sea Stewards social event will take place after the Crandall Spit Beach Cleanup on September 24th.
- Bowman Bay Restoration-Jay Lind: The Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group (SFEg), on behalf of the Skagit MRC, coordinated a weeding and watering work party at the Bowman Bay restoration site on August 3, at 10am. Unfortunately, only one volunteer showed up to help. The final work party will take place August 31st from 10:00a.m to 1:00p.m. The shrubs continue to look a little crispy but the dune grass, gumweed, and other forbs are growing in well. As part of the larger restoration project (not currently funded under the MRC grant), Jason Morgan leads the monthly beach seining surveys and Pete Haase leads the monthly fish surveys on the same day. The next one is scheduled for August 30th at 8:00a.m. No forage fish eggs have been found at Bowman Bay so far this year.
- Fidalgo Bay Day- Pete Haase: Fidalgo Bay Day will be held September 15 this year at the Fidalgo Bay Resort. Volunteers are lining up to help with different tasks. The event will include kid-friendly crafts, games, and interactive educational displays, complimentary samples of local seafood, beach seining, beach walks, the Shannon Point Marine Center's aquarium touch tank, and Samish's no-host salmon BBQ.
- Kids on the Beach Pilot Project- Pete Haase: Mira and Pete are working on a final report. This program will be expanded to other schools next year.
- Olympia Oyster Restoration- Paul Dinnel: It has been a very busy field season with lots of volunteers contributing lots of volunteer hours. There has been an impressive amount of Olympia oyster settlement in Fidalgo Bay this year, even in areas beyond the shell enhancement plots where the oyster larvae have settled on clam shells. As part of the larger native oyster restoration project, the Puget Sound Restoration Fund plans to put out additional shell and oyster seed this year in partnership with the Samish Tribe on the west side of Fidalgo Bay at Weaverling Spit. They will also be placing additional oyster shell and seed at Cap Sante area and along the trestle. Paul is working on a two-year project report. Paul led a tour of the Fidalgo Bay Olympia Oyster restoration project with Congressman Rick Larsen and Laura Gelwicks (Congressman Larsen's Community Liaison). 11 people participated in the tour, including a local reporter, which started at Shell's RV Park at Little Crandall Spit on the east side of Fidalgo Bay. The tour presented an excellent visual of the success of this project.
- Pinto Abalone Recovery- Paul Dinnel: Field work ended in April. As part of the larger project, Puget Sound Restoration Fund (PSRF) has been putting a lot of effort in their hatchery production to produce more juvenile abalone for outplanting. So far it has been very successful. PSRF is working with two graduate students from Western Washington University on bio-preservation with pinto abalone sperm to enhance the ability to fertilize eggs in the hatchery. They are also looking at larval outplanting of abalone which in theory would take less time, less tank space, and would be less expensive than outplanting juvenile abalone.
- Forage Fish Surveys- Pete Haase: Volunteers continue to collect monthly samples at the three index sites for WDFW. Lots of spawning happening at Similk Bay. But not much happening at the other sites. Monthly forage fish surveys also continue at the MRC nearshore restoration sites.
- Kayak Kelp Surveys - Phyllis Bravinder: Volunteers surveyed the kelp beds at Coffin rocks, Biz Point, and Shannon Point in July and August. The final surveys for the season will take place in September. All of the data collected is being sent to Suzanne Shull.
- Potential Beach Nourishment Project- Pete Haase: There is a stretch of beach located at March's Point that Pete said would be a good candidate for a beach nourishment project to help improve forage fish spawning habitat. The site is owned by Andeavor Refinery and is located on a north facing section of beach with good overhanging vegetation. The Committee agreed that this sounds like a good project. Pete will contact the Northwest Straits Foundation to see if they could help find funding for this project. The NWSF might also know who to contact at Andeavor Refinery to get permission to do the project.

Miscellaneous Events and Announcements:

- Fidalgo Shoreline Academy- October 20: The Friends of Skagit Beaches will hold its 7th Annual Fidalgo Shoreline Academy on October 20th at the Fidalgo Bay Resort in Anacortes. It will be a full day of workshops focused on our marine ecosystems, regional watersheds, and wildlife, as well the rich cultural heritage of our region. The Keynote Speaker will be Dr. Jude Apple.
- Crandall Spit Beach Cleanup - September 24, 9:30-11:30am: Volunteers are needed to help with a beach cleanup at Crandall Spit. We will meet for the event orientation at Crandall Spit Community Center on West March's Point Road,

just north of the trestle. Parking is limited, so attendees are encouraged to carpool from the March's Point Park & Ride to the Community Center. A Salish Sea Stewards potluck and speaker to follow cleanup from 11:30am - 1:00pm. Please RSVP to salishseastewaerds@gmail.com. (This cleanup is sponsored by Skagit MRC/Salish Sea Stewards, Shell Puget Sound Refinery, Friends of Skagit Beaches, Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve Citizens Stewardship Committee, and Skagit County Public Works)

- Marine Debris Data Collection, Sorting and Cataloguing -September 25, 9:00am – Noon: Volunteers are needed to help sort and catalogue trash removed from Crandall Spit on September 24 at the Padilla Bay Research Reserve. We will be using a new data collection protocol developed by the EPA and designed to better understand the types and sources of marine debris on our beaches. This data collection is critical to move a simple beach cleanup into the realms of citizen science, driving solutions and building scientific understanding of the problem of marine debris. Please RSVP to salishseastewaerds@gmail.com. (This project is sponsored by Skagit MRC/Salish Sea Stewards, Shell Puget Sound Refinery, Friends of Skagit Beaches, Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve Citizens Stewardship Committee, and Skagit County Public Works)
- Shoreline Landowner- Vegetation Management Workshop -Oct 16th, 5:30pm-8:00pm at the Fidalgo Bay Resort. Join the NWSF and Skagit MRC at Fidalgo Bay to learn about coastal processes and how to use native vegetation to manage your landscape for slope stability and wildlife habitat. Speakers include Ben Alexander and Lisa Kaufman.
- Skagit Land Trust Campaign to Protect Samish Island Property: The Skagit Land Trust is currently seeking grants and using its own funds to purchase and preserve over 34 acres of old growth forest and beach that make up the entrance to Samish Island. This ecologically important land is part of the Samish Flower Farm property that is now on the market and has sparked interest from developers. To help ensure the Skagit Land Trust will have enough funding to purchase the property they are trying to raise at least \$300,000 in donations from the community. The Skagit Land Trust is currently offering tours of the property to increase awareness and support to protect the property. For more information go to: <http://www.skagitlandtrust.org/news.aspx?postid=6339>.

The meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, September 13, 2018, 9am-11am at the Skagit County Administration Building in Mount Vernon.