



SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the September 13, 2018, Skagit County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) meeting, held at the Skagit County Administration Building in Mount Vernon

Attendees:

- **MRC Members Attending:** Tracy Alker, Sarah Tchang, Kari Odden (Lynne Jordan's Alternate), Betsy Stevenson; Todd Woodard, Julie Barber, Jamey Selleck, Jude Apple, Darla Gay Smith (Rachel Best's Alternate)
- **MRC Members Absent:** Matt Reynolds, Rachel Best Jay Lind, Paul Dinnel, Pete Haase, Lynne Jordan, Phyllis Bravinder, Nathan Biletnikoff
- **Others Attending:** Sarah Brown, Winston Churchill Fellowship Recipient; Todd Mitchell, Swinomish Tribe; Jason Morgan, NWSF

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

Approval of Minutes: August 9, 2018, MRC meeting minutes were approved as written.

Public Comments: No comments

Public Engagement in Marine Planning Discussion: *Sarah Brown, Marine Planner and Churchill Fellow Recipient*

Sarah Brown, a freelance consulting marine manager and planner from Scotland, recently received the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust UK Fellowship to learn about the different public engagement techniques in marine planning and maritime activities being used across the United States. She will be meeting with different stakeholder groups, marine planners, environmental conflict managers, invasive species experts, etc. on the east coast, west coast, and Great Lakes areas over a six week period. Sarah's goal is to learn how to best approach people and how to continue to keep them interested and engaged. Sarah was really interested in learning more about the Northwest Straits Initiative model. She talked to Lucas and plans to meet with several different MRCs to learn how we operate and the challenges we face. She was particularly interested in the volunteer component and how we are able to get and continue to keep so many different interest groups engaged and productive, even with very little funding for projects. Sarah asked some really thought provoking questions, reflecting on what brought the MRC members to the table in the first place and what keeps everyone coming back. MRC members said that with the citizen-based bottom-up approach of the MRC, there is local-buy-in and a real connection of place and the feeling of being more vested in the local community. The diversity of interest groups represented on the MRC has also increased our own awareness of the different local interests and helps build stronger partnerships. How do we engage the wider community? A public outreach component is built into most of our projects. Public engagement through volunteerism and community events like Fidalgo Bay Day is extremely powerful. What are some of our challenges? Reaching a consensus on priorities and actions, matching state priorities, limited funding and resources for projects, assigning a MRC Project Lead to see the project through, getting recognition for MRC projects and actions, and potential conflicts of interest of different interest groups represented on the MRC. MRC members will get a chance to review Sarah's report for accuracy and can comment on it before it gets published. Check out Sarah's blog to get regular updates on her travels: www.facebook.com/SarahWCMT) and her Twitter feed @sarahc2w or email her at sarah@c2w.org.uk.

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

- **MRC Conference, November 16-17, 2018 at Fort Worden:** Conference registration will be sent soon. Check for updates at the conference website: <http://nwstraits.org/2018-mrc-conference>. Senator Ranker is scheduled to attend part of the conference.
- **Puget Sound Partnership 2018 draft Action Agenda:** has been released for public comment.
- **NWSC Marine Program Manager Position:** Dana Oster was recently hired for the Marine Program Manager position. Dana is currently working with the Northwest Straits Foundation as a nearshore restoration specialist and will soon be taking on the NWSC Actions to Impacts Project (formerly known as Net Ecosystem Improvement).

- **MyCoast App State Wide Launch:** All MRCs are encouraged to participate in the statewide launch of MyCoast by identifying a local beach (or beaches) to include in the “take a beach photo” reporting tool. Skagit MRC members suggested adding the Bowman Bay restoration site. Jason Morgan offered to work with Sasha to get the Bowman Bay beach restoration site information set-up on the app.
- **Next NWSC Meeting:** The next Commission meeting will be held Friday, September 28, by WebEx 10am-12:00pm.

Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) Report:

- **Shoreline Armor Reduction Program (SHARP) - Samish Island Property Site Visits:** The Foundation is working to schedule technical site visits with Coastal Geologic Services at three different private properties on Samish Island this month. 2 of the 3 sites have some form of armor, but it is uncertain if either will turn into a removal opportunity. Betsy plans to attend the site visits on behalf of the MRC.
- **Potential Beach Nourishment Project:** At our MRC meeting last month, Pete identified a potential beach nourishment project located on March’s Point tidelands owned by Tesoro/Andeavor. The Committee expressed full support of the project. The project site is located on a north facing section of beach with good overhanging vegetation and a presence of forage fish eggs. The Coastal Geologic Service report that was completed for the MRC several years ago also identified this area for restoration or enhancement. Pete and Lisa walked the beach with representatives from Tesoro/Andeavor on August 30th. The reps really like the project idea, especially after Pete pointed out the eggs on the beach, and are interested in helping to fund it! Lisa is moving forward with the application process to apply for funding.
- **Boeing Grant for Stormwater Projects:** The Foundation received a \$50,000 grant from Boeing for MRC stormwater projects in Snohomish, Island, and Skagit Counties.
- **NWSI Marine Debris Work:** The Foundation just received \$221K (over 3 years) through the NOAA marine debris program for crab pot removal and outreach with Clallam and Jefferson MRCs. Jason and Nate have been tasked with chairing a session on marine debris at the upcoming MRC Conference. Jason will be highlighting the work being done by the MRCs.

MRC Administrative Report: Tracy Alker

- **MRC Display at the Skagit River Salmon Fest:** Tracy thanked the volunteers who helped host the MRC display at the Skagit River Festival last weekend including Rachel Best, Darla Gay Smith, Peggy Flynn, and Ryan Crabtree.
- **Current MRC Grant Expires -Sept 30th:** All deliverables and invoices are due! MRC members were asked to submit MRC-related hours and project updates.
- **New MRC Grant Starts - Oct 1st:** The Grant is currently being routed for signatures. The contracting process for our grant-related MRC projects will begin soon.
- **MRC Conference (Nov 16-17 at Fort Townsend)**
 - **Ignite presentation:** We need to identify an MRC member to take the lead on this. Nate said he won’t have time to do this.
 - **MRC Display:** MRC members were asked to provide ideas for the MRC display at the conference. What projects should be highlighted? Are there any ideas for making it more interactive? Are there any MRC members who would like to take the lead on this?
- **October 11 - MRC Meeting Agenda/Minutes:** Tracy announced that she will not be here for the October 11 MRC meeting and is seeking a volunteer to take notes/minutes. MRC members were also encouraged to provide ideas for guest speakers and agenda topics for the October 11th meeting.
- **King County Boat Tour - October 11:** King County invited MRC representatives for a boat ride on October 11 to share how they did a study to evaluate human induced changes along 90 miles of marine shoreline. Most of the changes observed were associated with repairs to existing bulkheads versus brand new bulkheads where they didn’t exist before. They also observed relatively low rates of the changes being permitted. In addition to Betsy, there is room for one more Skagit MRC member. Please let Tracy know if you would like to go.

Project Status & Discussion

- **Salish Sea Stewards:** Salish Sea Steward volunteers helped staff the MRC display at the Salmon Fest last weekend and will be helping with FBD this weekend. They have been busy helping with other MRC projects as well such as the beach seining and forage fish monitoring, oyster monitoring, kelp monitoring. The next SSS social event will be held after the Crandall Spit Beach Cleanup on Sept 24th. There will be a presentation on plastics and recycling. Lunch

provided by Shell Refinery. We are starting to promote next year's training which will likely happen in March 2019. We will need to go through the competitive process again to contract a volunteer program coordinator.

- **Bowman Bay Restoration:** The last weeding/watering party coordinated by the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group (SFEG) took place on August 31st. SFEG will be providing a summary report by the end of this month. The shrubs continue to look a little crispy but the dune grass, gumweed, and other forbs are growing in well. The Foundation has \$400 to purchase new plants. The new MRC grant has allocated \$2400 to contract with SFEG to continue plant maintenance work. 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 beach seining and forage fish surveys are scheduled for Tuesday, October 17. No forage fish eggs have been found at Bowman Bay so far this year.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** Fidalgo Bay Day will be held this Saturday, September 15 this year at the Fidalgo Bay Resort. Everything is now in place and ready to go! Set-up will take place this Friday. It would be great to get a few additional volunteers signed up to help give some of the other volunteers a break. Several MRC members are helping out with the event. 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. Tracy, Betsy, Rick Haley, Dan McCarty, and Heather Bickford will be hosting the MRC display and games and passport activities including: the Sormwater Golf Game, the Forage Fish Bean Bag Toss Game, the "Living Shorelines" display/demonstration, and the scuba diver photo booth. FBD is important because it helps adults and kids make the connection of the estuary in our own back yard and the creatures that live there and how our actions can impact the water quality and marine life.
- **Kids on the Beach Pilot Project:** The final report is now complete and will be shared with MRC members and posted on the MRC website. Mira is now working for The SeaDoc Society and has expressed interest in helping the MRC expand the Kids on the Beach project in collaboration with SeaDoc. Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve Citizen Stewardship Committee has also offered funding to help augment the program. The details still need to be worked out.
- **Olympia Oyster Restoration:** As part of the larger native oyster restoration project, the Puget Sound Restoration Fund applied for permits to distribute additional shell and oyster seed this year on the west side of Fidalgo Bay at Weaverling Spit in partnership with the Samish Tribe. 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 will present his Fidalgo Bay Native Oyster Restoration poster at the upcoming Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve Plan Update stakeholder meeting October 1.
- **Pinto Abalone Recovery:** The final report will be complete by the end of this month.
- **Forage Fish Surveys:** Volunteers continue to collect monthly samples at the three index sites for The Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). WDFW now has new staff in place so communications will improve and sampling results will happen a lot faster. Lots of spawning happening at Similk Bay. But not much happening at the other sites. Eggs have been detected at the Ship Harbor site along the Guemes Channel once again, which is rare. Monthly forage fish surveys also continue at the MRC nearshore restoration sites.
- **Kayak Kelp Surveys:** Five 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 for analysis and to post in Sound IQ. Jamey noted that they are finishing up year one of the state-wide kelp recovery effort and The Data Gaps Analysis and the Literature Review reports will be finalized soon.

Miscellaneous Events and Announcements:

- **Fish Assemblages of the Salish Sea - NOAA Workshop, October 18:** Jamey said that anyone can listen in on the workshop via www.GoToMeeting.com. This workshop came out of the Rockfish Recovery Plan. They will be going over large data sets to look at the changes in fish presence, abundance, composition, and trophic level interaction throughout the Salish Sea.
- **Orca Vigil- September 16, 10am-2pm at Bowman Bay:** Samish Indian Nation invites everyone to join them for a ceremony at Bowman Bay to honor the lost baby orca and grieve with the mother, Tahlequah. Lunch will be provided on the Rosario side.
- **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 salishseastewards@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)
- The Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve Plan Update: Stakeholder meeting – October 1, 1pm-3pm at the NW Educational Service District, Anacortes. RSVP Birdie Davenport at ROBERTA.DAVENPORT@dnr.wa.gov
- 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.
- 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.
- Skagit Land Trust Seeking Land Steward for Kelly's Point: The Skagit Land Trust is currently seeking a land steward for Kelly's Point on Guemes Island. The land steward would make a long-term commitment to help monitor and maintain the marine shoreline property.

MRC Membership Application- Todd Mitchell:

Julie Barber requested that Todd Mitchell take her place as the Swinomish representative on the MRC. Todd is the Director of the Department of Environmental Protection and a Swinomish Tribal member. The Committee voted in favor of making the recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to appoint Todd Mitchell to the Skagit MRC as Julie's replacement. There were no objections. Six MRC members who were unable to attend the meeting voted in favor via proxy. A resolution amendment appointing Todd to the Skagit MRC will need to be signed by the Board of County Commissioners to make it official. Tracy will email Todd a copy of the MRC Bylaws and MRC Membership Orientation Handbook.

Certificate of Appreciation - Julie Barber:

Julie was presented with a Certificate of Appreciation that was signed by all of the Committee members. Julie has been a member of the Skagit MRC since 2013. We are extremely grateful for the wealth of knowledge Julie brought to the MRC and many hours she dedicated to teaching the Salish Sea Stewards about shellfish and treaty fishing rights.

The meeting adjourned at 10:50 a.m. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, October 11, 2018, 9am-11am at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort in Anacortes.