



SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the January 10, 2019, Skagit County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) meeting, held at the Skagit County Administration Building in Mount Vernon.

- **MRC Members Attending:** Sarah Tchang, Jay Lind, Kari Odden (Lynne Jordan's Alternate), Pete Haase, Paul Dinnel, Phyllis Bravinder, Tracy Alker, Rachel Best, Nathan Biletnikoff, Betsy Stevenson, Jodi Bluhm (Todd Woodard's Alternate), Todd Mitchell, Jude Apple
- **MRC Members Absent:** Jamey Selleck, Lynne Jordan, Todd Woodard
- **Others Attending:** Lisa Kaufman, NWSF; Alice Sigurdson, Camp Fire Samish; Diane Hennebert, City of Anacortes

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

Approval of Minutes: December 13, 2018, MRC meeting minutes were approved as written.

Public Comments:

- Nate shared information about Governor Jay Inslee's new carbon initiative. There are two primary focus areas. One is primarily the electrification of the Washington State ferry fleet. The other focus is on reducing stormwater impacts on water quality across Puget Sound. Inslee also wants 100 percent clean energy in WA by 2045.
- Jude reported that Rozema Boat Works recently applied for a permit to upgrade and expand their wharf and dock at Bay View. It includes several different mitigation actions recommended by Padilla Bay NERR including: placing 100 cubic yards of beach nourishment, removing manmade debris and riprap, and replacing the solid wood dock with grading material so there is some light passage.

Northwest Straits Foundation Project Updates: *Lisa Kaufman*

- **Andeavor Grant/ March's Point Beach Nourishment Project Update:** The Northwest Straits Foundation recently received \$35,000 from the Andeavor Tesoro Anacortes Refinery (now called Marathon Anacortes Refinery) to do a beach nourishment project at March's Point in Anacortes. Lisa thanked Pete Haase for bringing forth this project idea to the Foundation. The project site is located along approximately 1500 linear feet of shoreline on the north side of March's Point. The site is a known forage fish spawning area with a lot of overhanging vegetation, which is a huge benefit. However, the spawning habitat has been negatively impacted by fallen road revetment material resulting in the direct burial of spawning habitat and a loss of adequate sediment. The Andeavor Grant will be used to help support a feasibility assessment to determine needs and methods for restoring nearshore habitat and function, some preliminary design, and baseline monitoring. The baseline monitoring will be conducted by volunteers. Pete Haase will lead the forage fish surveys and Jason Morgan will lead the beach seining and other nearshore monitoring. The Foundation will have an opportunity to apply for additional funding to support the next phase of this project next year. The MRC discussed the possibility of forming a subcommittee to work with the NWSF to help oversee this project.
- **Shoreline Armor Reduction and Prevention (SHARP) Program Update:** The NWSF held some great vegetation and shoreline processes workshops in 2018 with National Estuary Program (EPA) funding through the Habitat Strategic Initiative, including one here in Skagit County. The Foundation has some remaining NEP funding that will be stretched out until September. The focus will be on doing a few more site visits and finishing up the design work and permitting for those sites where they were able to get shoreline landowners engaged in removing shoreline armoring. Lisa is still working through some of the details on the shoreline riprap removal project in Similk Bay. The Foundation has \$50,000 from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for the Similk Bay project, but still needs more matching funds to actually make the project go. Lisa noted that ESRP Grant Funds will soon be taking over the Shore Friendly program. A Request for Proposals (RFP) will be posted the end of this month. Unfortunately, the structure of this funding does not include the actual outreach component of the Shore Friendly program. Instead, it will be a very technical application for technical site visits, research, and gathering more data. This funding could also be used for design, permitting, and applying for other grant applications for the implementation of armor removal projects. Lisa

plans to organize a conference call soon to start brainstorming ideas for the shoreline armor reduction and removal program. The NWSF will try to seek funding from other sources to use for outreach. But the funding opportunities are starting to become a little more challenging.

- **Near Term Action (NTA) Proposal:** Lisa is working on the second phase of the NTA Proposal which is due today. PSP identified 27 regional projects that will get a second look including two NWSF projects: 1. Shoreline Landowner Outreach, and 2. Shoreline Restoration Monitoring. Lisa and Jason will be working with Jason Toft to try to get a regional dataset of the changes that happen when the armor is removed.
- **Skagit Restoration Initiative (SRI) Funds Project Update:** \$10,000 of SRI funds have been allocated to the Skagit Land Trusts (SLT) water quality study at the Graber property on Fidalgo Bay. SLT in partnership with the Samish Indian Nation have been sampling two creeks that flow into Fidalgo Bay. They did an assessment of the dam to see if it was impacting the water quality. The results indicate the dam is not impacting the water quality. In fact, it might actually be helping. SLT would like to expand the outreach to more landowners than what was in the original scope of work. The scope of work and allocation of funds will need to be modified with approval of the MRC subcommittee.

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

Not much has happened since the last NWSC meeting which was reported at our last MRC meeting. The next NWSC meeting will be held January 25 in Island County from 10am – 3pm. Nate said he would be happy to attend if the newly appointed NWSC representatives are unavailable.

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

Don Hunger has been hired as the NWSF's new Interim Director, while Caroline Gibson is on medical leave. Don will be starting his new position on February 1. Caroline plans to work part-time from Port Townsend as she is able. Don has a lot of experience in leading non-profits and is very familiar with the Northwest Straits Initiative.

MRC Administrative Report: *Tracy*

- **MRC Grant QTR1 Progress Reports/Hours Due – Jan 11:** Tracy thanked MRC members for submitting their volunteer hours and for providing project updates for the progress reports. All grant deliverables posted in EAGL will now be accessible to the public. We will need to be careful about removing any sensitive information from the grant deliverables before uploading them to EAGL, such as home phone numbers, addresses, emails, etc.
- **2019-2020 MRC Project Planning/Funding:** We will need to start thinking about what projects we want to propose in the 2019-2020 MRC Grant cycle. We should be prepared to respond to a sudden increase or decrease in funding. The next grant application will be structured around Actions to Impacts. A list of projects with a brief description will be due in late February!
- **Northwest Straits Initiative Funding Support:** Lucas has been in contact with Congressman Rick Larsen's office to seek additional State funding support for the NWSI. Lucas provided the Congressman's office with a list of potential projects to show how the funding could be spent including ongoing projects with expansion opportunities and new projects that haven't been implemented yet. Some of the ongoing projects with expansion opportunities include: Kelp Recovery and Monitoring; Crabber Outreach; Eelgrass Protection and Monitoring; Pinto Abalone Restoration; Plastic Free Salish Sea; Olympia Oyster Restoration; MyCoast Application Expansion; Digging for Dinner (community education on sustainable shellfish harvest and water quality); and Nearshore Monitoring. Other potential projects that haven't been initiated yet include: Plankton Monitoring; Ocean Acidification Monitoring; and the Shore Friendly Program. Shore Friendly is an education and incentive program for homeowner bulkhead removal and nearshore restoration.
- **Letter of Support to Legislators for Funding:** Pete and Paul drafted a letter for the Board of County Commissioners to sign to the legislators in support of continued state funding for the MRCs. Tracy plans to make a few edits before sending it to the Board of County Commissioners for signature.
- **Fidalgo for the Future Cleanup Event- March 23:** Alli Schuh with the Anacortes Activist Student Union invited the MRC to participate in a cleanup event called Fidalgo for the Future on Sat March 23 in collaboration with the Anacortes High School Green Club, Friends of the Forest, and Transition Fidalgo and Friends. The Friends of Skagit Beaches will likely be participating as well. They will be inviting local business owners to pledge that they are going to transition away from single-use plastics in their business. Because the MRC is an Advisory Committee to the Board of County Commissioners and not an advocacy group, we cannot participate, but individual MRC members can participate on their own.

- Anacortes Rock Class Article: Micah Arnott with the Anacortes Rock Class is interested in writing an article about what the MRC does to protect the ocean. Pete Haase will be working with Micah on this. It will be a good opportunity to practice telling our story.
- Camp Kirby Partnership Opportunity: Alice with Camp Kirby will be meeting with Tracy, Pete, and Paul after today's MRC meeting to talk about potential partnership opportunities. They are particularly interested in talking about the Olympia oyster restoration, Kids on the Beach, forage fish surveys and other opportunities to expand their education and outreach program at their youth camp.

Project Status & Discussion

- Salish Sea Stewards: Applications are now being accepted for the SSS training. The application deadline is March 1 and is available on the MRC website. The training will be approximately 40 hours spanning ten weeks, starting March 19 – May 21, 2019. In return, volunteers will be asked to commit 40 hours of volunteer time towards MRC or related projects. Classes will be held every Tuesday from 1:00pm to 5:00pm at the Padilla Bay Reserve Facility. The facility has been reserved. Joan Drinkwin with NRC will once again be performing work as the Volunteer Program Coordinator. We have received three applications so far. Our budget was reduced this year, so we are asking participants to pay a \$12 fee to cover the costs of the background checks. The Friends of Skagit Beaches will be handling the fees. The next SSS Planning Subcommittee will take place this afternoon at Padilla Bay. The focus of the meeting will be on planning the training curriculum, recruiting volunteers, and promoting the training program. We will also be discussing the MRC Opportunity Funds and the proposal for the Salish Sea Stewards volunteer program needs assessment and workshop.
- Fidalgo Bay Day: Fidalgo Bay Resort has been reserved for next year's Fidalgo Bay Day on August 24th, 2019. Jay will be working with Pete and Gina to plan and coordinate the event. The Friends of Skagit Beaches will once again host the very popular Discovery Passport Station activity with other sources of funding for the prizes. This year's event will be part of the Skagit MRC's 20th Anniversary Celebration. We will also have the beach seining activity and the Shannon Point Marine Center touch tank. Jude shared that the Shannon Point Marine Center (SPMC) recently hired a new Education Program Coordinator, Coral Girkey. Coral will be SPMC's new contact person for coordinating the touch tank for Fidalgo Bay Day. Pete will help distribute 'Save the Date' cards at several upcoming events to help promote Fidalgo Bay Day.
- Forage Fish Surveys: Surveys continue at our restoration sites and index sites. Pete Haase and other volunteers took forage fish sampling equipment and egg samples to the Skagit River Interpretive Center on December 29 to give a talk and demonstration as part of the Bald Eagle Festival. They also took microscopes and egg samples for an activity at the Sedro-Woolley Evergreen Elementary School's Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) night for about 300 families on January 16. They will also be taking their forage fish gear and a poster to the Friends of Skagit Beach's lecture series on Friday, January 18 for a lecture on forage fish.
- Kids on the Beach Project: Last year we contracted with Mira Lutz to develop and implement this pilot project. Mira recently got hired with the SeaDoc Society/UC Davis as their new Education Coordinator. We are currently working on contract negotiations with UC Davis to continue to expand the program to other schools in 2019. If we cannot get a contract in place soon, we will need to start working on another alternative. We've gotten several inquiries about the program from other schools, so we know there is interest.
- Bowman Bay Restoration: We now have a contract in place with the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group to continue plant maintenance activities in 2019. Large woody debris have been accumulating along the shoreline and the plants are really filling in nicely, particularly the dune grass and coastal strawberry. The shrubs are still struggling a little bit because of the harsh climate conditions. We will likely be planting a few evergreen trees donated by SFEG in 2019. Plant maintenance work parties will be scheduled sometime this spring and summer. Lisa recommended the MRC consider budgeting additional funding to continue to do plant maintenance in 2020 until the plants become well established.
- Pinto Abalone Recovery: The Puget Sound Restoration Fund (PSRF) is gearing up to do their diver surveys to look for survival, growth, and new natural recruits. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is currently seeking public comment on a proposal to change the status of pinto abalone from a Species of Concern to a State Endangered Species. WDFW recently held public meetings in Port Townsend and Anacortes to present background information, answer questions, and receive comments. Paul will be drafting a letter that will be sent to the Board of

County Commissioners and WDFW on behalf of the MRC in support of changing the status of pinto abalone to a State Endangered Species.

- Olympia Oyster Restoration: Paul recently completed a report on Olympia Oyster Restoration in Fidalgo Bay and Cypress Island which is currently being reviewed. The report summarizes all of the work that has been done over the last 16 years. Information from the report will be included in the online Encyclopedia of Puget Sound. Paul is scheduled for a seminar on Olympia oysters at Western Washington University (WWU) next week. Field work will start up again in April or May 2019.
- Kayak Kelp Surveys: Phyllis will be attending the Kelp Recovery Workshop at Padilla Bay on February 28.

MRC Officer Elections:

The Committee unanimously appointed the following MRC Officers:

- Sarah Tchang – MRC Chair
- Betsy Stevenson- MRC Vice Chair
- Pete Haase- NWSC Representative
- Phyllis Bravinder- NWSC Alternate

Miscellaneous Events and Announcements:

- Terry Stevens Retirement Open House- **January 10**: 4pm-6:30pm at Padilla Bay.
- Friends of Skagit Beaches Annual Meeting- **January 17**: 11:00am- 2:00pm at the Padilla Bay National Research Reserve. A short business meeting followed by a potluck lunch. Lisa Kaufman will give a presentation on nearshore restoration and monitoring and the value of citizen scientists.
- Skagit Land Trust's Annual Membership Meeting- **January 17**: 5:00pm - 7:30pm at the Lincoln Theater in Mount Vernon.
- Friends of Skagit Beaches Annual Winter Lecture Series: The first lecture will be held **January 18, 2019** at the NW Education Services District Building in Anacortes, 7pm-8:30pm. "Forage Fish in the Southern Salish Sea" presented by Dr. Todd Sandell, PhD, Senior Forage Fish Biologist, WDFW. He will discuss recent studies that will help lead to better understanding, protection, and management of these crucial fish species, their habitats, and the species that depend on them. For more information about this and other upcoming Lecture Series topics please visit www.skagitbeaches.org
- Storming the Sound- **January 24**: 9am-4:30pm at Maple Hall in La Conner. Storming the Sound is a conference for environmental educators in the north Puget Sound region to share their interest and expertise. They are currently seeking presenters. There is a registration fee of \$10. You can register online: <http://www.pacname.org/regional-chapters/washington/storming-the-sound/#tab-id-1>.
- Pacific Estuarine Research Society Conference- **April 25-27**: This conference will most likely be hosted at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort. More details to come. It will be the first time it has been held here in about five years. The theme of the conference will be "Performing Science in Today's Changing World". For more information: <http://www.pers-erf.org/>
- Skagit Land Trust's Fidalgo Bay Carstens Stewardship- **February 2**: The work party will be focusing on pulling ivy and planting native shrubs to help this beautiful parcel reclaim its natural habitat.

The meeting adjourned at around 10:45 a.m. The next MRC meeting will be held February 14, 2019 at the Fidalgo Bay Resort, 4701 Fidalgo Bay Road Anacortes.