



SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the June 18, 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, Pete Haase, Tracy Alker, Paul Dinnel, Lynne Jordan, Jude Apple, Diane Hennebert, Betsy Stevenson, Phyllis Bravinder, Nicole Casper (Todd Mitchell's Alternate)
- **MRC Members Absent:** Jamey Selleck, Todd Mitchell, Todd Woodard
- **Others Attending:** Wayne Huseby, FOSB/FBARCSC; Brian Robson, Shell PSR; Dana Oster, NWSC; Jason Morgan, NWSF

Call to Order and Introduction: Sarah Tchang called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. and opened the meeting with introductions.

Approval of Minutes: May 9, 2019, MRC meeting minutes were approved as written

Public Comments: No comments

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

The last NWSC meeting was held over WebEx on May 31.

- 2019 MRC Conference will be held November 15-16 at the Courtyard by Marriott in Everett. The reception and dinner will be held at the Angel of the Winds Arena in Everett. Save the date cards were distributed to MRC members.
- June 28th NWSC meeting in Everett from 10:00am-3:00pm. Each MRC will be presenting one of their proposals for the new MRC Grant. Pete Haase will present Skagit MRC's Salish Sea Stewards proposal.

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

- A joint meeting of the NWSC and the NWSF Executive Committees was held June 7 in Port Townsend. Jay and Jude both attended. Jude said he was impressed with how well the two groups communicated and worked through issues together. It was a very productive meeting. They discussed securing and streamlining funding for the predictable work of the MRCs. They also talked about the challenges in balancing the NWS Initiative regional scale programs with the locally driven priorities of the MRCs. Regional projects aren't always a good fit for every MRC.
- Tarrell Kullaway, NWSF Director of Philanthropy, recently resigned.
- Don is working with Lucas on the annual NWS Initiative Operations Plan.
- Skagit MRC's proposal to the NWSF's MRC Opportunity Fund-Boeing Stormwater Category has been approved for full funding.

Project Status & Discussion

- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** The event will be held August 24, 11am-3pm at the Fidalgo Bay Resort. Some of the supplies have been ordered. The Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve Citizen Stewardship Committee is considering the possibility of funding a portion of an AmeriCorps staff person's time to help support Fidalgo Bay Day next year.
- **Forage Fish Surveys:** Surveys continue at our restoration sites and index sites (Similk Bay, Guemes Channel, and Samish Island).
- **Kids on the Beach Project:** The program is now complete. The program details and recommendations will be compiled into a final report that will be used to help expand the program to other schools next year. Pete will be working with Mira and Padilla Bay staff to discuss the best options for collaborating on this project next year. Pete along with at least twelve other volunteers helped 19 kids from Island View Elementary School conduct a forage fish survey at Fidalgo Bay on June 13. A ton of eggs were found on the beach! Todd Woodard made a surprise visit and talked to the school group about the Samish Tribe and the importance of Fidalgo Bay. It was a wonderful treat for the kids! This was the school's third year participating in forage fish surveys at Fidalgo Bay.
- **Bowman Bay Restoration:** Monthly plant maintenance work parties with the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group started May 17 and will continue each month through September 20. The next one is scheduled for June 21. Monthly beach seining and forage fish surveys continue at Bowman Bay.

- **Pinto Abalone Recovery:** Field work is now complete for the season. The results will be compiled into a final report that will be finalized in September. There is still no evidence of successful natural spawning in the wild. Pinto abalone were recently listed as Endangered in Washington State. The state legislature set aside some funding to help support the pinto abalone recovery effort. A fundraising event for abalone was held on Bainbridge Island.
- **Olympia Oyster Restoration:** Sampling season is now in full swing again. Field activities have been reduced this year. Cultch bags were retrieved from 20 different locations around Fidalgo Bay to get an index of oyster settlement quantity and distribution. So far the results indicated a relatively low recruitment of oysters last year. Results also show that oysters are still not making it over to the west side of Fidalgo Bay. This is likely due to the north-south flow of water in Fidalgo Bay and not much mixing so the currents tend to keep the larvae being spawned on the east side of Fidalgo Bay. It is anticipated that the oyster shell and seed oysters distributed in Weaverling Spit on the western side of Fidalgo Bay last year will start spawning this summer. Paul helped Puget Sound Restoration Fund (PSRF) place oyster shell string samplers in Fidalgo Bay and Padilla Bay, and all over Puget Sound to get a good index of oyster larval settlement at the different locations. Paul also worked with PSRF and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) to distribute tile plates for oyster larvae settlement. The plates are collected at two week intervals. Paul will be working with Jude at Padilla Bay NERR to look for potential oyster restoration sites at the south end of Padilla Bay.
- **Kayak Kelp Surveys:** A kelp management workshop lead by the NWSC was held on June 13 in Olympia as part of the Puget Sound Kelp Conservation and Recovery Plan. Our lead kelp monitoring volunteers will be conducting a short paddle and protocol review at the Shannon Point kelp site on June 27. The plan is to meet at Sunset Beach in Washington Park, Anacortes at 9:00am. A kelp monitoring planning meeting will be held July 1 from 3 -4:30pm in the Padilla Bay upper conference room. Surveys will start up again in July. Congressman Rick Larsen is interested in going out on a kelp survey with some of our volunteers on June 30th. Details are still being worked out.
- **Salish Sea Stewards:** The Friends of Skagit Beaches hosted a volunteer appreciation picnic on June 4 at Bowman Bay. Pete brought a cake to the picnic in celebration of the NWS Initiative's 20th Anniversary. A Volunteer Needs Assessment Survey went out to all of the volunteers through Survey Monkey. We received 38 responses to the survey (about a 20% response rate). Preliminary results indicated that volunteers were not interested in helping with the administrative tasks of the Salish Sea Stewards program. The Salish Sea Stewards Planning Workshop was held June 13 at Padilla Bay from 9am to 4pm. Around 30 people attended. A lot of good ideas were discussed. Joan will compile the results of the survey and the workshop into a report for the MRC.

MRC Membership Update:

- Nate Biletnikoff recently resigned his seat on the MRC as the representative for Shell Puget Sound Refinery after accepting a new position in a different state.
- Lynne Jordan announced that she is also resigning her seat on the MRC as the representative for the Skagit Land Trust due to the travel requirements of her full-time job. Lynne is still interested in being involved as her schedule permits. Karri Odden, Lynne's alternate on the MRC, will temporarily take Lynne's place until she can find a new replacement to represent the Skagit Land Trust.
- MRC members expressed gratitude for the wealth of knowledge and valuable insights Nate and Lynne contributed to the MRC. We were very lucky to have them!

Miscellaneous Events and Announcements: All

- Pete has been invited to be interviewed by Shell Puget Sound Refinery on June 12. The purpose of the interview is to find out how Shell is doing in the local community.
- Skagit Land Trust Work Party at the Fidalgo Bay Carstens Stewardship Property on August 3th from 10am-1pm. Coastal Geologic Services recently completed a restoration study of the property for the Skagit Land Trust. The results of the study will be presented at a future MRC meeting.
- There is a new invasive species in Skagit County waterways, the New Zealand mud snail. The mud snails were recently discovered in Big Indian Slough near the tide gates. They tend to cling to vegetation in the water and can easily be transported and spread by humans and waterfowl. Rodger Fuller, the Watershed Stewardship Coordinator at Padilla Bay NERR, is developing monitoring plans and implementing decontamination procedures to help prevent further spread of this invasive species.

The meeting adjourned at 2:30pm. The MRC's 20th Anniversary Celebration was held at 3:00pm. The next MRC meeting will be held July 11, 2019 at the Skagit County Administration Building in Mount Vernon (1800 Continental Place).