



# SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the January 9, 2020, Skagit County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) meeting, held at the Skagit County Administration Building in Mount Vernon

## Attendees:

- **MRC Members Attending:** Tracy Alker, Jay Lind, Pete Haase, Diane Hennebert, Phyllis Bravinder, Rachel Best, Jude Apple, Matt Castle, Paul Dinnel
- **MRC Members Absent:** Todd Mitchell, Kathy Thornburgh, Brian Robson, Betsy Stevenson
- **Others Attending:** Lisa Kaufman (NWSF), Melanie Del Rosario (NWSF), Kevin Anderson (Port of Anacortes, MRC Member Applicant)

**Call to Order and Introduction:** Jay Lind called the meeting to order at 9:20 a.m. and opened the meeting with introductions.

**Approval of Minutes:** December 12, 2019, MRC meeting minutes were approved as written.

**Public Comments:** No comments

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

The last NWSC meeting was held December 6 (WebEx Conference Call) and reported at the last MRC meeting December 12.

- No updates since the December 6<sup>th</sup> NWSC meeting.
- Next Monthly NWSC Meeting: January 31 at Camano Island (10am – 3pm).

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

- NWSF Staff Update: Foundation recently hired new Admin Staff as well as a new part-time Nearshore Program Outreach Assistant. The Philanthropist position still remains vacant.
- NWSF Board Meeting: The next Board meeting will be held tomorrow. They will be introduced to the newest Board member from San Juan Island. Jay said his term on the Board will be ending soon.

## Shore Friendly Program Update: *Lisa Kaufman, NWSF*

The Shore Friendly program is a collaborative Puget Sound-wide program that provides education, resources, and incentives to shoreline landowners to reduce the number of bulkheads to protect and improve coastal processes, beach habitat conditions, and prey availability for salmon seabirds, and orcas. One of the biggest barriers to overcome in the Shore Friendly program is the perception of shoreline property owners that bulkheads are the best way to protect their property from erosion. The hope is that through this program, shoreline landowners will find that natural shorelines are much more desirable than bulkheads and will choose to maintain natural shorelines and forego hard armor, or consider alternatives to hard armor. Soft shore alternatives are actually less expensive than repairing or replacing bulkheads.

The NWSF has been providing shoreline landowner outreach in partnership with the MRCs and the Friends of the San Juans for several years now. In Skagit County, the NWSF reached over 240 landowners through workshops, provided 51 site visits with technical assistance, completed one armor removal project design, and 200 linear feet of riprap is planned for removal in 2021-2022. The NWSF recently received funding to continue to build on the outreach and incentives of the Shore Friendly program in 2020. Additional funding will be needed to do technical services training for agencies to share information with landowners. Melanie del Rosairo was recently hired as NWSF's new Nearshore Program Outreach Assistant, [delrosario@nwstraitsfoundation.org](mailto:delrosario@nwstraitsfoundation.org) to assist with the outreach effort.

NWSF's 2020 Shore Friendly program will continue to focus on shoreline landowner workshops, technical assistance, site assessments, and planning for: armor removal opportunities if present and address any barriers to removal, erosion/coastal processes, vegetation, drainage, structure (septic) relocations, and assisting with applying for permits, and mini-grants and cost share. Shore friendly books will also be sent to all of the new shoreline property owners. Incentives to reduce armoring will be provided to landowners who are willing and as funding is available. Incentives will include expert on-site guidance, and assistance with permitting and restoration project design. Lisa is looking for help identifying local experts to provide technical assistance and training especially for structure or septic relocations. She is also looking for help in identifying a few trusted community leaders who could help spread the message about the

benefits of the Shore Friendly program. In addition to partnering with the MRCs, NWSF is also working closely with the Swinomish on this phase of the Shore Friendly program to help them with their outreach.

#### **North March Point Beach Restoration Project (Andeavor/Marathon Refinery Grant) Update:** *Lisa Kaufman, NWSF*

Jim Johannessen (Coastal Geologic Services) conducted a site evaluation to look at options for restoration and enhancement. Unfortunately, they discovered that all of the native overhanging vegetation had been mowed down! The overhanging vegetation was one of the main reasons for selecting this site. Marathon managers expressed concern about the vegetation and is investigating what happened. Lisa will be presenting to the Marathon environmental team to teach them about the nearshore habitat and forage fish. Project construction could begin as early as 2021 pending funding. Marathon indicated they would like to see this project through and would likely be willing to help fund the actual implementation of the project. The MRC might also want to consider including funding for project in 2021 MRC grant.

#### **Orca Recovery Events:** *Lisa Kaufman, NWSF*

The NWSF's grant for Orca Recovery forums just got extended until June 2020. Over 100 people attended the Orca Recovery forum event in Snohomish County in October. They also created bookmarks with a list of 10 things citizens can do to help orcas that were distributed at the event. Lisa asked if the MRC would be interested in hosting a forum in Skagit County in March or April. She would help get the speakers lined up. The MRC would need to reserve the facility and help promote the event. The Committee agreed to let Lisa know if we want to participate sometime next month.

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

- **Salish Sea Stewards:** The Salish Sea Stewards training program is being administered in partnership with Padilla Bay this year. Padilla Staff is currently working on the training schedule and confirming speakers using past training curriculums as a guideline. Training will include both classroom style lectures interspersed with field activities. Classes will be held every Tuesday starting March 10<sup>th</sup> through May 12<sup>th</sup> from 1pm-5pm at Padilla Bay. The promotional flyer and application have been updated and posted on the MRC website. Padilla Bay is now sending out "The Wave". Information to be posted in "The Wave" should be sent to [salishseastewards@gmail.com](mailto:salishseastewards@gmail.com).
- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** The date for next year's event has been set for Saturday, August 29, 2020 at the Fidalgo Bay Resort. Jay said he doesn't mind being the MRC Project Lead for Fidalgo Bay Day (FBD), but he will need a lot of help to make the event happen. A FBD Planning Subcommittee was established at the last MRC meeting including: Jay, Pete, Phyllis, Rachel, Tracy, and Dianne. Kevin also expressed interest in helping with Fidalgo Bay Day. Matt said he would like to help with the beach seining activity as well as be the liaison for the Fidalgo Bay Resort facility and Samish Tribe, etc. The subcommittee will likely meet sometime in February to come up with a list of task assignments and lead volunteers. Jude said he reached out to the Anacortes Green Club about helping with kids activities. Even though the summer is really busy for the Green Club, they said they would be willing to help. Padilla Bay has all of the supplies for fish prints and would be willing to help organize this activity in addition to bringing their own display. Susan Wood said she would be willing to participate in the planning meetings for FBD as we move forward. Tracy will send Jay a list of subcommittee members to schedule a meeting.
- **Bowman Bay Restoration:** The Sub-Award Agreement with Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group has been signed. Plant maintenance work will begin in May or June 2020. After four years of post-construction monitoring, evidence of surf smelt and sand lance were found on the beach at Bowman Bay. Surf smelt spawning at that site was last documented in 2003 by WDFW. Beach seining nets also caught large schools of herring!
- **Forage Fish Surveys:** Surveys continue at the Bowman Bay, NW March's Point, and Kukatali Preserve restoration sites, as well as the three index sites (Similk Bay, Guemes Channel at Ship Harbor, and Samish Island). In addition to surveys, volunteers are also involved in outreach and frequently get requests to give talks/demonstrations to the public and school groups. Pete said they get a lot of questions about bulkheads and shoreline armoring when they give their forage fish talks and demos, so it would be great to have the Shore Friendly outreach materials on hand. Pete and Jack Middleton recently gave a talk/demonstration on forage fish at the Skagit Eagle Festival in December. They tied the importance of forage fish to eagles. On January 23, a team of volunteers will be helping with the microscope/ forage fish egg activity at the Sedro Woolley STEM night. Pete said they could use extra help! An intertidal monitoring meeting will be held February 12 at Padilla Bay.
- **Kids on the Beach:** No updates until the spring when students from Sedro Woolley, Concrete, and Mount Vernon will be participating in science activities on the beach at Padilla Bay. The activities will focus on invasive species. SeaDoc submitted their proposal for the grant the MRC discussed last month. They were able to find five partners including Padilla Bay as part of the Kids on the Beach Program.

- Pinto Abalone Recovery: The Sub-Award Agreement with Puget Sound Restoration Fund just got signed this week. Field work will start up again in February.
- Olympia Oyster Restoration: No update. Field work will likely start up again in April 2020.
- Kayak Kelp Surveys: No update. Surveys will likely start again in June or July 2020. The Kelp Recovery Plan is out for public comment. You can read the plan and comment online here: [http://bit.ly/KelpPlan\\_1219](http://bit.ly/KelpPlan_1219). If you would like to receive future updates about the Plan, please contact [kelp@nwstraits.org](mailto:kelp@nwstraits.org).

#### **Northwest Straits Foundation's Boeing Stormwater Grant Project Update:** *Diane Hennebert*

The engineering firm identified five potential sites for bioswales in Anacortes that would benefit Fidalgo Bay. The deliverables including descriptions and cost estimates for each site are now complete and will be shared with MRC members. Each site was prioritized in order including: **#1.** Mt. Erie Elementary School Visitor Parking Lot; **#2.** Longview Avenue-Q Avenue to S Avenue; **#3.** Roadside Bioretention – 36<sup>th</sup> Street near O Avenue; **#4.** Roadside Bioretention- Q Avenue near 34<sup>th</sup> Street; **#5.** Roadside Bioretention – O Avenue and 35<sup>th</sup> Street. Additional funding will be needed for construction for all of the proposed projects. The rain garden signs will be delivered next week, but they won't be installed until after construction. Diane said she has also been involved in a Low Impact Development demonstration project at City Hall in Anacortes.

#### **MRC Membership Applicant:** *Kevin Anderson*

The Committee voted unanimously by consensus to make the recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to appoint Kevin Anderson to the MRC. Kevin will replace Sarah Tchang as the representative of the Port of Anacortes on the MRC.

#### **MRC Officer Elections:** *Jay Lind*

The Committee voted unanimously to appoint Betsy Stevenson as MRC Chair for a second term. Unfortunately, nobody expressed interest in serving as MRC Vice-Chair. Jay Lind offered to continue serving as interim MRC Vice-Chair for just one more month. However, a new MRC Vice-Chair will need to be appointed at the February 13 MRC meeting.

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

- Friends of Skagit Beaches Winter Lecture Series: The first lecture will be held Friday, January 17, 2020, 7PM at the NW Educational Services District Building in Anacortes (1601 R Ave) - "Blue Legacy: Vanishing Glaciers in Washington's National Parks" presented by Dr. Jon Riedel, Park Geologist, North Cascades National Park.
- Storming the Sound- January 30: 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. The proposal deadline is January 7. There is a registration fee of \$10. You can register online through Eventbrite. For more information go to: <http://www.pacname.org/regional-chapters/washington/storming-the-sound/#tab-id-1>.
- Skagit EcoNet Meeting: January 21: 2pm-4pm at Padilla Bay.

**The meeting adjourned at 11:20 am. The next MRC meeting will be held February 13, 2020 at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort in Anacortes**