

Skagit County Marine Resources Committee

Minutes of the January 12, 2012 meeting held at the Mount Vernon Senior Center

Members Attending: Lori Kyle, Ivar Dolph, Tracy Alker, Connie Thoman, Erica Pickett, Rachel Benbrook, Kari Odden, Neil Borman, Rebecca Spurling, Paul Dinnel, Kurt Buchanan, Kevin Bright

Members Absent: Scott Schuyler, Christine Woodward, Polly Fischer, Charles O'Hara, Betsy Stevenson, Jim Ramaglia

Others Attending Sharron Riggs, Padilla Bay; Joan Drinkwin, NWSF; Ginny Broadhurst, NWSC

Call to Order and Introductions: Lori Kyle began the meeting at 9:10 a.m.

Minutes: Approved.

Public Comments: None.

NWSC Report

The MRC/NWSC Conference occurred in December so there was no NWSC meeting.

Administrative Report

- Thanks to the project leads we were able to get our grant reports turned in on time for the July 1 – December 31, 2011 grant reporting period. Volunteers contributed over 3,000 hours to MRC tasks and activities in 2011.
- We are currently in the process of drafting a new grant agreement for the January 1 – June 30, 2012 grant period. The grant agreement will have to be ratified to have a start date of January 1, 2012. All projects under this grant agreement must be completed by June 30, 2012.
- The following tasks will be included in the new six month grant agreement:
 - Task 1: MRC Operations (Tracy- Project Lead) -\$8,000: This task supports MRC operations including: meetings, travel, training, supplies for special events and updating the MRC display, educational materials, reprinting MRC brochures, some staff time, etc;
 - Task 2: WSU Beach Watcher Support (Ivar- Project Lead) -\$13,000: Skagit MRC will partner with Washington State University to provide 100 hours of professional training to Beach Watcher Volunteers. In return, the trained Beach Watchers will commit to 100 volunteer hours towards Skagit MRC related projects. This task will also involve project management and volunteer coordination;
 - Task 3: Plastic Cap Recycling (Rebecca- Project Lead) -\$500: This project will help Educate students and the public about the impacts of plastics in the marine

environment and what they can do to help. This project will include classroom presentations, articles in the paper, a public outreach campaign to collect plastic caps, and a large mural will be created by students for their school made out of plastic caps. The Samish Indian Nation will help provide a platform for sharing ideas and spreading the word on how to reduce plastics in the marine environment. \$500 of MRC funding will go towards purchasing supplies;

- Task 4: Shannon Point Rip Rap Removal Project Design (Paul- Project Lead) - \$12,000: This project was identified as a high priority by the MRC under the last grant funding cycle, but there was not enough money to move forward. \$12,000 under this current grant will help fund the project design. This project aims to remove significant rip rap on the southwestern side of Shannon Point to help restore 730ft of shoreline for forage fish spawning and natural beach sediment nourishment. Spawning of two species of forage fish has been documented on shorelines of Shannon Point during both winter and summer periods. Paul is working with the City to determine potential impacts on the Tommy Thompson trail. The rip rap could potentially be used to stabilize the bluff upland.
- The Northwest Straits Foundation was recently awarded a \$10,000 grant from the Burning Foundation for MRC education and outreach activities around forage fish. \$5,000 of that money will go towards supporting Skagit MRC priority projects including Fidalgo Bay Day (Erica Pickett-project lead), Community Beach Seining (Paul Dinnel- project lead), and a forage fish survey training for Beach Watcher volunteers (Kurt Buchanan- project lead). The project leads will help develop the Scope of Work for these tasks.

Skagit MRC “Visioning” Work Session

Ginny and Joan helped to facilitate the MRC work session. Ginny pointed out that elected officials need to be made aware of the importance of keeping the MRC funded because the County will lose an important function if they lose the MRC. Ginny recently attended the Coastal Caucus where she gave an update on the budget. The elected officials acknowledged the value of the NWSC and the MRCs and agreed to write a letter of support. Funding from the Puget Sound Partnership is starting to look a little more promising. However, funding that comes from the Partnership will be for work that focuses on the Action Agenda. It is a good idea to have a diverse source of funding. The Northwest Straits Foundation can help look for and manage private funding sources while the NWSC can continue to search for government support. Joan pointed out that building a good case statement can be a useful tool to get funding and to help the MRC stay focused on reaching goals. The case statement should include the MRC's mission, goals, objectives, history, structure, fundraising plan, and financial statement, and budget. Some of the language used in the case statement can be pulled from the MRC's Five Year Strategic Plan and Bylaws. It would also be a good idea to develop talking points or a script for MRC members to follow when talking about the MRC so that everybody is on the same page. It is important to note that MRC members are appointed by County Commissioners because that gives the MRC more credibility. In addition, it is important to keep the MRC website updated and consistent because that is where potential funders will go to get more information about the organization. The MRC will continue to work on building a good case statement at the next MRC meeting in February.

Project Status & Discussion

- **WSU Beach Watchers:** Some of the funding from the Friends of Skagit Beach's Trail Tales project will be used to help support the WSU Beach Watcher Coordinator position. Lynne Jordan, the WSU Beach Watcher Coordinator, has taken another position. Lynne has agreed to continue working part-time until the Coordinator position has been filled. The Winter Lecture Series from January – April 2012 at the Anacortes Public Library. Planning is currently underway for a one day university that will occur June 2nd at the Samish RV Park.
- **Shore Stewards:** The Shore Stewards workshop was held Saturday, December 10 (9:30 AM – 2:00 PM) at the Seafarer's Memorial Park building in Anacortes. Twelve shoreline landowners attended the workshop. Workshop topics included: bluff dynamics, shoreline regulations, septic system maintenance, beneficial native plants, and ten guidelines for

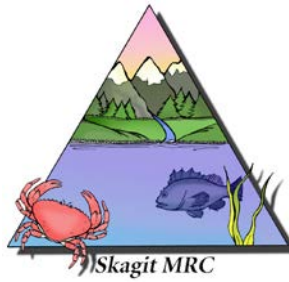
shoreline stewardship. There are currently 175 households involved in the Skagit County Shore Stewards program.

- **Community Beach Seining Event:** The next Community Beach Seining event at Ship Harbor will occur in June and August 2012.
- **Smart Sponge:** The experiment had to be redesigned a few times to make it work. Still waiting to get significant rain before collecting more water samples from the Smart Sponge at Bay View to test for fecal coliform.
- **Native Oyster Restoration:** Puget Sound Restoration funds will be used to purchase native oyster seed from the hatchery. The Fidalgo Bay oyster stock appears to be producing the most seed. The native oyster seed will be planted at four new locations in 2012 including: Padilla Bay, Fidalgo Bay, and two locations in Skagit Bay. Skagit Restoration Initiative funds will be used to expand the oyster habitat in Fidalgo Bay in 2012.
- ***Spartina* Surveys:** Trained volunteer kayakers surveyed approximately 50 miles of shoreline in Skagit County and a total of 223 throughout the Northwest Straits region. The majority of *Spartina* plants were found in Skagit County, so it's important to continue the survey program to stay on top of it.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** Fidalgo Bay Day will be held September 15, 2012.
- **Young Beach Stewards:** 16 MVHS students completed the program and received YBS certificates. Student volunteers contributed over 208 hours pulling invasive weeds, swale cleanups, and public education and outreach.
- **Plastic Cap Recycling:** The Girl Scout troops completed a snail mural made out of plastic caps. The mural will be on display at the Island View Elementary School. Frontier Industries donated the plywood. MRC funds were used to purchase supplies. An article about the project will be placed in the Anacortes American.

Miscellaneous Announcements

- Sound Waters (a one day university) will be held at South Whidbey High School, February 4, 2012.
- January 21, 2012, Captain Charles Moore will give a presentation in Bellingham on plastics in the marine environment.

The meeting adjourned at 11:10 a.m. The next meeting will be held Thursday, February 9th at the Seafarer's Memorial Building in Anacortes.



Skagit County Marine Resources Committee

Minutes of the February 9, 2012 meeting held at the Seafarer's Memorial building in Anacortes

Members Attending: Lori Kyle, Tracy Alker, Connie Thoman, Erica Pickett, Rachel Benbrook, Kari Odden, Neil Borman, Rebecca Spurling, Kurt Buchanan, Jim Ramaglia

Members Absent: Kevin Bright, Paul Dinnel, Ivar Dolph, Scott Schuyler, Christine Woodward, Polly Fischer, Charles O'Hara, Betsy Stevenson

Others Attending Rae Kozloff, citizen; Pete Haase, volunteer; Don McMoran, WSU Skagit Ext Director

Call to Order and Introductions: Lori Kyle began the meeting at 9:10 a.m.

Minutes: Approved.

Public Comments: None.

NWSC Report

- The Puget Sound Partnership has provided a verbal agreement to keep the Northwest Straits Commission and the MRCs funded at basic operational levels for at least one year. The ultimate long term goal will be to fund the Initiative through Congress. Ginny will provide a description of what base level funding provides and the value of the NWSC and the MRCs in carrying out pieces of the Action Agenda. However, the current Action Agenda does not adequately recognize the work of the Initiative. Ginny will be working with the Partnership to draft a proposal in the next few weeks that will be based on a list of key focus areas for MRC projects based on existing MRC workplans.
- The annual retreat is scheduled for March 1-2 at Padilla Bay. There will be a discussion on how to ensure our work is MRC driven when work has to fit into the Action Agenda, we will identify core MRC projects, and we will discuss projects that we do regionally as well as individually.
- The Commission is in support of the legislative Medicine Take Back program and on a statewide plastic bag ban. The Commission plans to write a letter on the effects of plastics in the marine environment.
- There needs to be a greater separation between the NWSC and the NWSF. Ginny cannot be the Director of the Foundation since she is the Director of the NWSC. They will need to decide whether or not to advertise for the Director's position or to place Joan in that position since she is doing that job already.

Administrative Report

- The new MRC grant is currently undergoing the signature process. The agreement will be ratified to have a start date of January 1, 2012. The contract will expire June 30, 2012. Because this grant requires a 1:1 match, we will need to closely track volunteer hours, donations, equipment, professional services, and other types of in-kind support that could qualify as a match.
- There was some concern over poor meeting attendance. MRC members who are frequently absent will be contacted to let them know that their presence at the meetings is very important. MRC members have the option of assigning a new person or an alternate if their schedule conflicts with attending meetings regularly. They also have the option to become a non-voting member (ex-officio).
- It is important that the MRC get more involved with the PSP and the LIO process. So far there has been only one meeting on the LIO process, but no decisions have been made.
- The MRC website is in desperate need of a makeover. The webpage with the County is very difficult to find and to maneuver around. We have a domain name all set up, but Tracy hasn't had the time to work with Sasha to create a new webpage. Several MRC members suggested getting an intern to work on the website. It would be good experience for a college student.
- The Northwest Straits Foundation was recently awarded a \$10,000 grant from the Burning Foundation for MRC education and outreach activities around forage fish. \$5,000 of that money will go towards supporting Skagit MRC priority projects including Fidalgo Bay Day (Erica Pickett-project lead), Community Beach Seining (Paul Dinnel- project lead), and a forage fish survey training for Beach Watcher volunteers (Kurt Buchanan- project lead). The project leads will help develop the Scope of Work for these tasks.

Skagit MRC Officer Elections

- Lori Kyle was nominated for a second term as MRC Chair, Kari Odden was nominated as the MRC Vice-Chair, and Rachel Benbrook was nominated to be the NWSC representative. We will also need a NWSC representative alternate. However, because we did not have a quorum, the actual elections will have to be postponed until the meeting in March.

Skagit MRC Restoration Initiative

- The 2012 Annual Work Plan for the Skagit MRC Restoration Initiative was approved by the NWSC and was provided to the Department of Ecology for approval on January 31, 2012.
- The 2011 Annual Report for the Restoration Initiative has been completed.

Skagit MRC "Building a Case-Statement" Work Session

The MRC work session involved building a case statement to use as a tool to get funding and to help the MRC stay focused on reaching goals. The case statement will also be useful for developing talking points for MRC members to follow when talking to others about the MRC. It is a good idea to make sure we are all on the same page. The case statement includes the MRC's mission, goals, objectives, history, structure, fundraising plan, and financial statement, and budget. It also includes a list of MRC members and interest groups who are appointed by County Commissioners. It is a good idea to note that the MRC members are appointed by the Commissioners because it will give the MRC more credibility. Some of the language used in the case statement was pulled from the MRC's Five Year Strategic Plan and Bylaws. During the work session the MRC completed the Mission Statement and Goals, and discussed Objectives and History before running out of time. Tracy will make the revisions as discussed and will send the revised document to the MRC members for additional input. The MRC will continue to work on building a good case statement at the next MRC meeting in March.

Project Status & Discussion

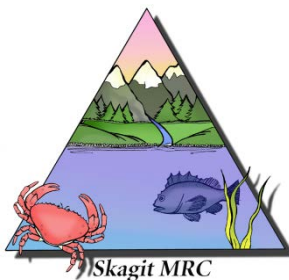
- **WSU Beach Watchers:** The Winter Lecture Series from January – April 2012 at the Anacortes Public Library. Planning is currently underway for a one day university that will occur June 2nd at the Samish RV Park. Recently hired Nancy Olsen as the new WSU Beach Watcher Coordinator. Nancy will start February 15th.

- **Community Beach Seining Event:** The next Community Beach Seining event at Ship Harbor will occur in June and August 2012.
- **Smart Sponge:** No Report
- **Native Oyster Restoration:** No Report
- **Shannon Point Rip Rap Removal:** No Report
- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** Fidalgo Bay Day will be held September 15, 2012.
- **Plastic Cap Recycling:** The Girl Scout troops completed a snail mural made out of plastic caps. An article about the project was placed in the Anacortes American. The article will also be posted on the MRC website. Adam Lorio gave an engaging presentation on the impacts of plastics in the marine environment. Captain Charles Moore gave a talk in Bellingham about the garage patch that he accidentally discovered in the Pacific Ocean in 1997. Rebecca hopes to find a way to bring Captain Charles Moore to the Anacortes community to give his talk. The Girl Scouts will continue collecting plastic caps through the end of March. During the week of April 16-20, several adult volunteers are needed to assist students with tools to build the mural and escorting students to/from classrooms to the mural-building room. Contact Rebecca if you are interested in volunteering.

Miscellaneous Announcements

- Samish Sip 'n Slurp, a fundraiser for the Skagit Conservation Education Alliance (SCEA), will be held at Taylor Shellfish Farm at Samish Bay (2182 Chuckanut Drive on March 3 from 6 to 9 PM. \$75/person. Online reservations only: www.taylorshellfish.com
- There will be a free screening of "Apples to Wheat," at the Lincoln Theater on February 22, 2012 at 7 PM. The video will star local farmers from the Skagit County agricultural community.
- The Skagit Conservation District's native plant sale will take place March 23-24 (open sale dates) and April 14th at the Plant Materials Center located at 16564 Bradley Road, Bow, WA. The brochure and order form is located on the website: http://www.skagitcd.org/native_plant_sales. There is a 15% discount for orders of \$500 or more.
- April 21, 2012 is the Swinomish Earth Day celebration. We will need one or two volunteers to host the MRC display and help with children's activities.
- People for Puget Sound will host a screening of "Sound and Vision" at the Seattle Aquarium on February 15, 2012 at 7:00 PM. Rachel said that the People for Puget Sound would like to partner with the MRC to host a screening of the film on Guemes Island in April or May. The MRC could hold a potluck meeting just before the show.
- The Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Symposium will be held February 15, 2012 at 9:00 AM.
- The Department of Fish and Wildlife is offering a free 8-hour HAZWOPER class to citizens who are interested in oiled wildlife response. The class will be held Saturday, February 25, 2012 at 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM in Everett. You can register online at: www.wdfw.wa.gov/about/volunteer/events/, or contact Andy Carlson at andy.carlson@dfw.wa.gov or call (360) 902-8125. The registration deadline is: February, 22, 2012.

The meeting adjourned at 11:05 a.m. The next meeting will be held Thursday, March 8th at the Mount Vernon Senior Center.



Skagit County Marine Resources Committee

Minutes of the March 8, 2012 meeting held at the Mount Vernon Senior Center

Members Attending: Lori Kyle, Tracy Alker, Erica Pickett, Rachel Benbrook, Kari Odden, Neil Borman, Rebecca Spurling, Kurt Buchanan, Jim Ramaglia, Betsy Stevenson, Paul Dinnel, Ivar Dolph

Members Absent: Kevin Bright, Scott Schuyler, Christine Woodward, Polly Fischer, Charles O'Hara

Others Attending Pete Haase, volunteer; Nancy Olsen, WSU Skagit Beach Watcher Coordinator; Michael See, SCPW

Call to Order and Introductions: Lori Kyle began the meeting at 9:10 a.m.

Minutes: Approved.

Public Comments: None.

Colors of the Sound, by Jim Ramaglia

- Jim presented a digital slideshow of his amazing underwater photography. Jim's photos highlighted the great diversity of marine species living beneath the Salish Sea, ranging in many different colors, shapes, and sizes. Initially you might only notice one or two of the more prominent species in the photos, but if you take a closer look you will see so much more. Decorator crabs are sometimes difficult to see because they have mastered the art of disguise by covering their exoskeleton with various anemones and coral polyps. Rocks and other hard surfaces are encrusted with various forms of marine life such as colorful sponges, sea anemones, and corals. Purple ring top snails, sea stars, sea pens, sea urchins, sea cucumbers, and nudibranchs are among some of the most colorful marine invertebrates in the Salish Sea. Many species seem to take on their own personalities. Harbor seals can be very curious and playful while the Giant Pacific Octopus is a bit more elusive and shy. Sculpin are tiny fish that are fun to watch because they like to hide inside empty shells. Some of the creatures are so small you can barely see them with a naked eye. Jim said that it wasn't until he loaded the photos onto the computer that he could really see the interesting details like the eyeballs of the kelp greenling eggs nestled inside an empty barnacle shell. Jim was able to capture some of the extreme detailed close-up shots with a digital Nikon camera outfitted with a macro-lens protected in a waterproof casing. He has to get as close as six inches to the subject in order to really capture all of the interesting details. The MRC discussed the possibility of posting Jim's slide show on Skagit 21 to help bring awareness to the great diversity of marine life in the Salish Sea and to send the message as to why it's so important to clean up stormwater pollution.

Skagit MRC Officer Elections

- The 2012 MRC elected officers as follows: Lori Kyle, MRC Chair; Kari Odden, MRC Vice-Chair; Rachel Benbrook, NWSC representative; and Christine Woodward, NWSC Alternate.

NWSC Report

- The annual MRC/NWSC retreat was held March 1-2 at Padilla Bay. We discussed procedures for providing information on potential new sources of funding for the MRCs, establishing a process and direction on how to secure long-term funding stability, and getting direction on how the Foundation and the NWSC should support the MRCs.
- We have a verbal commitment in place with the Puget Sound Partnership to keep the NWSC & MRCs funded at basic operational levels for at least one year. Each MRC will receive ~\$60K of EPA funding through the PSP. MRC projects must tie in with priorities in the Action Agenda identified in Ginny's memo to the PSP.
- One of the challenges we are now facing is striking a balance between qualifying for available funding and staying true to the mission, goals, and objectives of the NWSC and MRCs.
- MRC representatives shared recent achievements, assets, challenges and concerns of each MRC. Almost everyone agreed that one of the biggest assets for all MRCs is the wide diversity of expertise MRC members bring to the table and the other is maintaining staff to keep things running. Some of the greatest challenges the MRCs have faced include keeping people engaged with no funding, bureaucracy, communication between the MRC and the Commissioners, and lack of funding for education and outreach.
- The unique role of the NWSI and what the Foundation and the NWSC can provide was discussed. The locally-based public-private-tribal partnership of the NWSI is really powerful. It provides opportunities for citizens to protect and restore Puget Sound and provides a mechanism for citizens to advise local officials on issues affecting the marine environment. The NWSC forms a direct link among regional and local environmental priorities and communication with elected officials. Restoration work backed by the NWSC will move forward more quickly. The Foundation can help the MRCs secure grants and manage donations from private funding sources.
- There was a discussion on long-term funding. The question was asked about how much time and effort should be focused on acquiring long-term funding. It would be a good idea to package all of our success stories into compelling messages that start with the people, the accomplishments, and the strategy. We need to try to showcase the NWSI as the model to convince the Obama Administration to write us in as a line item that warrants replication in other regions.
- One of the success stories that should be shared is how several MRC projects have expanded into regional projects such as the derelict gear program, Olympia oyster restoration, and forage fish surveys/mapping.

Administrative Report

- We now have a signed grant agreement in place so now we can start charging to it.
- Because this grant requires a 1:1 match, we will need copies of volunteer sign-in sheets and really need to keep track of volunteer hours & other in-kind services, donations, sponsors, etc. There is a match-tracking spreadsheet that the project leads will need to fill out.
- We are currently waiting to get the Beach Watchers contract signed.
- Paul Dinnel developed a Scope of Work for the Shannon Point Rip Rap Removal Project Design. We sent out a Request for Quotes to contractors from our Small Works Roster. The contractors will be evaluated based on certain criteria such as cost estimates and qualifications.
- MRC members discussed forming a subcommittee to plan for and present a report to the County Commissioners.
- The Puget Sound Partnership has requested information on model stewardship programs that resulted in measurable desired behavior changes. Some examples of Skagit MRC projects could include: Shoreline Landowner Workshops, Car Wash Kits, and Crabber Outreach. However, it would be difficult to provide or prove measurable behavioral change results with any of these projects. The information request is due March 31, 2012.

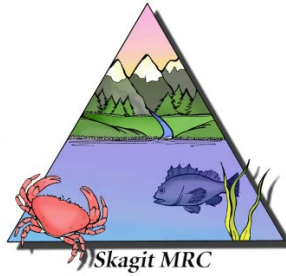
Project Status & Discussion

- **WSU Beach Watchers:** Ivar introduced Nancy Olsen as the new WSU Beach Watcher Coordinator. Nancy hit the ground running with the upcoming Beach Watcher Training. A record number of 27 people signed up for BW training this year! In addition to the 27 new Beach Watchers, 12 people signed up for the Trail Tales docent training program. The docent training program is a two year program focused on the Tommy Thompson Trail. Nancy said that one of her goals will be to quantify the value of the Beach Watchers. MRC members discussed how the trained volunteers have such an important impact on the local community. The knowledge about the issues facing our marine resources and what people can do to help is spread throughout the community by people talking to people.
- **Community Beach Seining Event:** The next Community Beach Seining event at Ship Harbor will occur in June and August 2012.
- **Smart Sponge:** Paul is working on the supplemental report. The report concludes that the Smart Sponge technology is not the answer for removing fecal coliform bacteria in the Bay View area. Smart Sponge material is too expensive to replace and it is too much work to maintain where sedimentation is an issue. We will need to continue looking into other options for removing fecal coliform bacteria before it reaches the Bay such as redirecting stormwater drainage during rainy months.
- **Native Oyster Restoration:** We received an official letter from the Padilla Bay Reserve giving us permission to plant native oyster seed in Padilla Bay. Sharon Riggs and a college student from the Shannon Point Marine Center will help plant native oyster seed. The project will be funded through the COSSEE program. Jude Apple will be the Liaison for the Shannon Point Marine Center.
- **Shannon Point Rip Rap Removal:** A Request for Quotes was sent out to six consultants from the County's Small Works Roster. The contractors will be evaluated based on qualifications, cost estimates, and whether or not, they can complete the work by June 30, 2012.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** Fidalgo Bay Day will be held September 15, 2012 at the Fidalgo Bay RV Park.
- **Plastic Cap Recycling:** The Girl Scouts taught other students how to create a butterfly and snail mural out of plastic caps. The murals were displayed at Island View Elementary School for the World Thinking Day held February 2nd. Several adult volunteers will be needed to assist students with tools to build a large mural and to escort students to/from classrooms to the mural-building room during the week of April 15-20. The mural will have the Lorax theme. Contact Rebecca if you are interested in volunteering. Students who participate in trash clean-ups will be included in a drawing for prizes. One possible idea is to give away movie tickets to the Lorax. The Girl Scouts will continue collecting plastic caps through the end of March.

Miscellaneous Announcements

- The Ocean Acidification Seminar will be held at the Padilla bay Reserve March 22, 2012 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. The seminar is sponsored by the NWSC, the Skagit MRC, the Whatcom MRC, and the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership. Please RSVP to Caroline Gibson at: Gibson@nwstraits.org or (360) 428-1057.

The meeting adjourned at 11:05 a.m. The next meeting will be held Thursday, April 12, 2012, location TBD



Skagit County Marine Resources Committee

Minutes of the April 12, 2012 meeting held at the Skagit Conservation District in Mount Vernon

Members Attending: Lori Kyle, Tracy Alker, Erica Pickett, Rachel Benbrook, Kari Odden, Neil Borman, Rebecca Spurling, Kurt Buchanan, Jim Ramaglia, Christine Woodward, Paul Dinnel, Ivar Dolph

Members Absent: Kevin Bright, Scott Schuyler, Betsy Stevenson, Polly Fischer, Charles O'Hara

Others Attending: Pete Haase, volunteer; Kellie Dalrymple, Samish Tribe; Sharon Riggs, Padilla Bay; Bob Hyde, Port of Anacortes

Call to Order and Introductions: Lori Kyle began the meeting at 9:02 a.m.

Minutes: Approved.

Public Comments: None.

Friends of Skagit Beaches "Trail Tales" Program Update, presented by Betty Carteret

The Friends of Skagit Beaches (FOSB) is a non-profit organization created to help support the WSU Beach Watchers program. FOSB was recently awarded Ecology's Public Participation grant (\$90,000) for the "Trail Tales" Anacortes Shoreline Interpretive Program in collaboration with Ecology's Baywide Cleanup effort in Anacortes. It is a two year grant, but they plan to reapply for another two year grant to continue the program. In addition, FOSB is currently working with DNR to identify additional funding for aquatic reserve interpretive support. The Trail Tales Interpretive Program is a volunteer-led public education, recreation and outreach project that focuses on Fidalgo Bay and the Anacortes Shoreline. It supports the Anacortes Baywide Cleanup effort, increases awareness of human impacts, and fosters stewardship of marine and shoreline environment, as well as the history of the shoreline. The WSU Skagit Beach Watchers coordinator will lead the interpretive program in partnership with Ecology, the City of Anacortes, the Port of Anacortes, the Samish Indian Nation, the Anacortes Museum, and the WWU Shannon Point Marine Center. The Interpretive Plan for the project was issued in March and is available on the FOSB website: <http://www.skagitbeaches.org/resources-a-links.html>. The Plan includes interpretive trail signs with website links, a docent training program, a map for self guided hikes and docent-led hikes, and special presentations and events. 41 volunteers signed up for the Trail Tales docent training program. FOSB is looking for local organizations to sponsor signs. The signs will be organized in groups at Discovery Points.

Central Weaverling Spit Beach Enhancement Update, presented by Christine Woodward

Damage to the Fidalgo Bay shoreline occurred in 2001-2002 when Phase I condos were built. All vegetation was removed from the shoreline including several large trees, and a shell midden site was damaged. During an archeological investigation in 2003, human remains and shell middens were

discovered falling out of the bank and onto the beach. Something had to be done immediately to stabilize the shoreline and protect the archeological site. Emergency permits were issued in 2005 for temporary soft shore armoring to protect the site. Due to improper installation, the soft shore armoring failed in less than six months and the shoreline continued to erode away. Approximately five feet of shoreline was lost over a four year period. In 2008 the condo developers decided not to move forward with Phase II of the condo construction /shoreline stabilization due to the downturn of the economy. The Samish Indian Nation stepped up and took the lead on the shoreline stabilization project in 2009. They used existing engineered plans and permits and funding was acquired through multiple partnerships including the Northwest Straits Commission and the Skagit MRC Marine Restoration Initiative. In addition, there is now a lien against the property, so the property owners will be responsible for paying back a portion of the cost to do the work.

Phase II extends the beach stabilization project an additional 500 feet onto Samish Tribal Lands. Drift sills were engineered and installed with ecology blocks to help keep the beach in place. Students from the Cap Sante Alternative High School helped plant native plants along the shoreline. Seven planting beds are now in place and the plants are doing well. Seven cedars were planted in remembrance of the Tesoro victims. Many lessons were learned from this project. The equipment got stuck because the beach was too soft. They had to build a pathway using one truck load of rock at a time before they could even start the project. The equipment was not allowed to go on top of the middens, so the material could only be offloaded at one location on the beach. Much of the material had to be moved by hand. The tides also became an issue and work had to start earlier and earlier. In 2010 there was a huge storm that washed away three feet of material. The boat ramp was completely undercut. The good news is that there was evidence that the newly engineered beach helped to dissipate the energy of the storm due to the natural characteristics of the shoreline. As part of the 2012 work plan, a draft design has been completed and the permits are now in place. They are in the process of getting a water quality certification from Ecology. The project design has two access sites and only two drift sills will be installed. The construction start date is September 1, 2012.

NWSC Report

- Each MRC will receive \$60,000 for the period of July 1, 2012 – June 30, 2013 through the Puget Sound Partnership that will be restricted to funding to support staff and MRC operations only, not projects. The MRCs will need to discuss how to find additional funding to help support projects. The Skagit MRC is in a position that allows for a little more time to negotiate and get leveraged funding. The current contract can be amended to include the additional funding and extend the expiration date.
- Rachel suggested the MRC write a letter to the County Commissioners thanking them for supporting MRC staff time. Because of the county's support, most of the MRC funding has gone directly towards projects.
- Joe Gados provided the NWSC with an update on the Puget Sound Partnership's Trans-boundary Science Panel. There is a long comprehensive list of actions which they are in the process of prioritizing. There will be a PSP science panel meeting on September 18th and 19th.
- The Whatcom MRC is working on a Smart Sponge project that focuses on removing bacteria in an area where there is a high concentration of cormorants and cormorant poop. Luckily they haven't had to deal with any sedimentation issues like the Skagit MRC did. Rachel suggested sharing the Skagit MRC Smart Sponge report with the Whatcom MRC.
- The 2012 Marine Managers Workshop was recently held in San Juan County. 75 people participated. The main focus was on oil spill prevention and readiness and salmon recovery research and shoreline planning.
- Clallam MRC had a tsunami debris meeting. There was a lot of interest. 80 people attended.
- Rachel suggested the Skagit MRC revisit the list of MRC priorities to determine if there are any projects the MRC would like to get funded with help from the Northwest Straits Foundation. The smaller projects could possibly get rolled in with projects from other MRCs to make them more eligible for funding.

Administrative Report

- Quarterly progress reports are due. Because this grant requires a 1:1 match, we will need to include volunteer hours & other in-kind services, donations, sponsors, etc. There is a match-tracking spreadsheet that the project leads will need to fill out.
- MRC members formed a subcommittee to plan for and present a report to the County Commissioners in September. The subcommittee includes: Tracy, Lori, Erica, Betsy, and Rachel. Please send Tracy photographs to include in the presentation.
- Last month the Puget Sound Partnership requested information on model stewardship programs that resulted in measurable desired behavior changes. Lori submitted the Car Wash Kit program as an example.
- Bob Hyde, Executive Director of the Port of Anacortes, was unanimously elected as the newest member of the Skagit MRC. His membership will become official as soon as it is approved by the Board of County Commissioners. Bob will be a really great addition to the MRC. Welcome aboard Bob!
- Lori suggested adding miscellaneous announcements to the bottom of the meeting agendas for those who can't make it to the meetings.
- Rachel asked the MRC if they would be interested in co-hosting a showing of the documentary "Sound and Vision with People for Puget Sound at Guemes Island in June. We could have our regular MRC meeting just before the showing of the documentary from 4:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. followed by a potluck. The movie would start around 6:30 or 7:00 p.m. The last ferry leaves at 8:30 p.m. Although MRC members liked the idea of co-hosting the documentary at Guemes Island, they were concerned that there are a lot of graduations going on in June so there might be low attendance. July and August might not work either because most people want to be outside. An outdoor showing in La Conner might be an option. Or we could have it at Guemes Island at the end of June or in the fall. We don't have to have the MRC meeting on the same day that we show the film. The film could be shown as a separate special event all together.

Project Status & Discussion

- **WSU Beach Watchers:** 27 people are participating in the BW training program this year! It is the largest class yet. It is very encouraging that the interest in the program is still so strong and growing. The BW training is currently underway. Erica gave a special thanks to Don McMoran for getting a new Beach Watcher Coordinator hired so quickly. Nancy, the new Beach Watcher Coordinator has done a really great job in getting up to speed on the program. She really had to hit the ground running with the BW training program. Over 100 people have been showing up for the Friday lectures series held at the Anacortes Public Library. A One Day University will be held June 9th at the Fidalgo Bay RV Park. The keynote speaker will be Dr. Delaney Delaney from the University of Washington's School of Oceanography. Online registration is available until 6/4 at <http://fidalgoacademy.eventbrite.com>. There is a \$20 registration and a \$9 lunch will be available for purchase.
- **Community Beach Seining Event:** The next community beach seining event at Ship Harbor will occur in mid-June and August 2012. The event in June will be paid for with Skagit MRC funds and the event in August will be paid for with funding from the Northwest Straits Foundation. The events will be advertised through community posts. The hope is to have around 40 to 60 community members participate. There is some concern about the event getting too large. There is limited space and a large crowd would be more difficult to manage. Volunteers will be asked to help with these events.
- **Smart Sponge:** Paul originally planned on getting additional samples this year. However, the trough containing the Smart Sponge material had failed and there was a substantial amount of infiltration from stormwater and sedimentation. Paul completed the supplemental report. The report concludes that the Smart Sponge technology is not feasible in areas with high volumes of stormwater and sedimentation such as Bay View. Alternative solutions to cleaning up the stormwater should be considered.
- **Native Oyster Restoration:** SRI funds will be used to help the native oyster restoration effort this year. Last week Paul and a student at the Shannon Point Marine Center filled and distributed 20 oyster cultch bags to monitor this year's oyster settlement. A college intern will

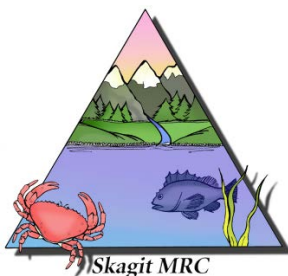
help pull up the bags that were deployed last year to monitor last year's oyster settlement. Paul looked at one bag that was left at the trestle last year which appeared to have very light oyster settlement compared to previous years. This summer an additional 50 cubic yards of oyster shell in Fidalgo, Padilla, and Skagit Bays to help enhance oyster habitat. Oyster seed will also be distributed at four different locations this summer.

- **Shannon Point Rip Rap Removal:** Contracted with Aqua-Terr Systems, Inc. to develop a project design for the removal of rock rip rap on the western shore of Shannon Point. Work will include a cost and feasibility analysis. The initial feasibility report will be completed by the end of June. The contractor has made several site visits and is working closely with Paul. The riprap removal will have to be coordinated with the City's planned construction extending the western portion of the Tommy Thompson trail. The City of Anacortes is interested in using the rock riprap to help build the trail along the hillside.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** Fidalgo Bay Day will be held September 15, 2012 at the Fidalgo Bay RV Park. Planning is currently underway.
- **Plastic Cap Recycling:** The donated plywood panels for the Lorax mural have been cut and delivered to Island View Elementary School so that students can start attaching the plastic caps collected from the community. Adult volunteers will be assisting students with tools to build the mural and to escort students to/from classrooms to the mural-building room during the week of April 15-20. MRC members Kari Odden and Kevin Bright have volunteered to help. There will be an educational component that will focus on the harm that plastics cause in the marine environment and what kids can do to make a difference. Students will complete pledge cards to do their part in making a difference in the marine environment. They will participate in trash clean-ups on the beaches as well as upland. The Anacortes American has been covering the project.

Miscellaneous Announcements

- Free workshop for local residents on April 24th (9:00 a.m. to noon at Padilla Bay and 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Taylor Shellfish Farms) to learn how home activities fit into the Skagit River and Samish watershed and what is being done to improve water quality of the Salish Sea. Please register by April 20th. Contact Nancy Olsen: nancyo@co.skagit.wa.us or 360-428-4270 ext. 0.
- April 25th (8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) is the Swinomish Earth Day celebration. Please let Tracy know if you would be interested in hosting the MRC display.
- The last day of the Skagit Conservation District is native plant sale is this Saturday.
- April 28th (10:00 a.m. to noon) is the native plant sale at the WSU Extension.
- This Friday is the last WSU Beach Watcher lecture at the Anacortes Library at 7:00 p.m. The talk will be on "Tectonics Processes of the Salish Sea." Be sure to come early if you want a seat!

The meeting adjourned at 11:05 a.m. The next meeting will be held Thursday, May 10, 2012, Mount Vernon Senior Center



Skagit County Marine Resources Committee

Minutes of the May 10, 2012 meeting held at the Mount Vernon Senior Center

Members Attending: Lori Kyle, Tracy Alker, Erica Pickett, Rachel Benbrook, Kari Odden, Neil Borman, Rebecca Spurling, Kurt Buchanan, Jim Ramaglia, Charles O'Hara, Ivar Dolph, Bob Hyde

Members Absent: Kevin Bright, Scott Schuyler, Betsy Stevenson, Polly Fischer, Christine Woodward, Paul Dinnel

Others Attending: Pete Haase, volunteer; Sharon Riggs, Padilla Bay; Bob Fritzen, WDOE; Allison Cook, WCC Padilla Bay; Marnee Chua, Pacific Biodiversity Institute; Aileen Jeffries, Pacific Biodiversity Institute

Call to Order and Introductions: Lori Kyle began the meeting at 9:02 a.m.

Minutes: Approved.

Public Comments: The Skagit Conservation District received a letter from a concerned citizen regarding potential environmental impacts from the oil barges anchoring off of Samish Island. The consensus of the MRC was to provide a response with the appropriate contacts and resources to help address his concerns. The response will be sent on Skagit Conservation District letterhead. Rebecca said that Puget Sound anchorages are regulated by the US Coast Guard. The Captain of the Port is Captain Ferguson. In addition, there is a Harbor Safety Committee <http://www.pshsc.org/> that has produced a Harbor Safety Plan [http://www.pshsc.org/about/harbor_safety_plan_updated April 2012](http://www.pshsc.org/about/harbor_safety_plan_updated_April_2012). The plan includes the number of vessels that are allowed to anchor at each location and the maximum allowed stay. The Harbor Safety Committee contact is John Veentjer, Executive Director.

Harbor Porpoise Monitoring_ Pacific Biodiversity Institute: *presented by Aileen Jeffries*

The Pacific Biodiversity Institute (PBI) is a nonprofit organization that conducts conservation science research and provides consulting and data management services to organizations concerned with natural resource management and biodiversity conservation. One of PBI's missions is to develop scientific information to aid in the protection of rare and imperiled species. Aileen Jeffries, a research scientist and board member of PBI, initiated the harbor porpoise monitoring project based out of Anacortes. The harbor porpoise is designated "a species of concern" by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. Although the harbor porpoise is not yet federally listed as threatened or endangered, it has suffered a significant decline in population and range. The goal of this project is to set a baseline for the population that can be used to realistically assess the stability of the species in the Puget Sound and to help determine various factors important to its long-term survival. A geo-spatial model based on biophysical and behavioral ecology of the harbor porpoise will help predict their optimal habitat.

The project which began in 2009, involves land-based observational monitoring as well as acoustic monitoring. Passive Acoustic Monitors (PAMs) are being used to collect data on harbor porpoise occurrence and distribution in the Burrows Pass area. The effect of anthropogenic noise on porpoise behavior and habitat use of the harbor porpoise will be analyzed. The acoustic data is continuously recorded 24 hours a day. Prior to deploying the acoustic equipment in Burrows Bay, the equipment was first tested with an orphan harbor porpoise at the Marine Mammal Rescue Center in Vancouver B.C. One of the biggest challenges with acoustic monitoring of the harbor porpoise is deciphering the acoustic discrepancies between the Dall's porpoise and the harbor porpoise, which are both present in Puget Sound. Although there have been no observations of Dall's porpoises in the Burrows Pass area during the two years of data collection. This is one of the reasons why land-based observations, in addition to acoustic monitoring, are so important.

Preliminary results show the Harbor porpoise to be present in the Burrows Bay observation area an average of 41% of the time. Some trends are starting to become more apparent. Harbor porpoises are present more often during the fall and winter months than they are during the spring and summer months. They are present 84% of the time in February and only 6% of the time in May. Results also show a strong diurnal cycle. There appears to be less harbor porpoises present in the middle of the day than at night. Herring, a major food source of harbor porpoises, also have a strong diurnal pattern. They have been observed coming up closer to the surface at night, so there could be a correlation. Harbor Porpoises are more often found in tide rips where the forage fish get tumbled making them easy prey. Monitoring will continue and many factors will be examined. A big "thank you" goes out to the Beach Watcher volunteers who have contributed many hours helping to monitor the harbor porpoise.

NWSF/NWSC Report

- The Northwest Straits Foundation is currently bringing in more money to the MRCs than the Northwest Straits Commission. They discussed making a clearer definition between the Foundation and the Commission.
- Terry Stevens and Ginny Broadhurst can no longer sit on the board of the Foundation because state agency employees cannot have decision making authority regarding policy or financial decisions for a non-profit organization that channels through a lot of money.
- Because of the fiduciary responsibilities, only the elected NWSC representatives have the power to vote, not the alternates. It is possible that they could vote by proxy for minor things such as passing the minutes. The NWSC has not had a quorum for the last two meetings.
- The Foundation is getting prepared to handle audits. They are currently just under the \$500,000 annual funding expenditure threshold.
- The question was asked whether or not the NWSC should continue to exist. The consensus was yes. The Commission serves an important function in providing regional and technical support and maintaining a connection between all of the MRCs. We should make every effort to keep it going.
- The Puget Sound Partnership will provide funding to help support MRC operations starting July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2013.
- The NWSF will be receiving capacity funding from the Russell Family Foundation.
- There was a discussion on the proposed coal plant in Bellingham and whether or not the MRCs want to get involved and if so, how much do they want to get involved. There is a lot of concern over a potential increase in ship traffic and impacts to water quality and air quality.

Administrative Report

- The current MRC grant ends June 30, 2012. We have only spent \$2,442 on the grant so far which means \$34,952 remains in the budget. It is anticipated that most of the money will be spent by the end of this grant period. However, there will be some unspent funds at the end of this grant period from the plastic cap recycling project and from WSU Beach Watcher training.
- The Skagit MRC grant amendment has been submitted to Ecology for signature. Some of the funding will be used to update and print the MRC brochures and possibly towards hiring an intern to set up the MRC website.

- The Skagit MRC poster was displayed at the “Blue Festival: Sustainable Oceans, Sustainable Futures” at the Lincoln Theater on May 12th. Captain Charles Moore gave a presentation on his research on the Great Pacific Garbage Patch and tsunami debris.

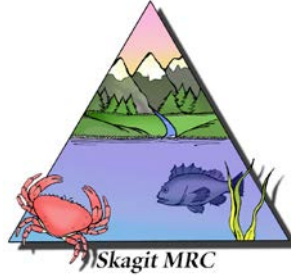
Project Status & Discussion

- **WSU Beach Watchers:** 27 newly trained and highly motivated volunteers will be graduating from the BW training program tomorrow! It is the largest class yet. Graduation will take place at Padilla Bay.
- **Community Beach Seining Event:** The next community beach seining event at Ship Harbor will occur June 14, 2012 and August 13, 2012. The events will be advertised through community posts. Paul is seeking volunteers to help with these events.
- **Native Oyster Restoration:** No Report.
- **Shannon Point Rip Rap Removal:** Contracted with Aqua-Terr Systems, Inc. to develop a project design and feasibility analysis for the removal of rock rip rap on the western shore of Shannon Point. The contractor has made several site visits and is working closely with Paul and other partners.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** Fidalgo Bay Day will be held September 15, 2012 at the Fidalgo Bay RV Park. Event planning and volunteer coordination is currently underway.
- **Plastic Cap Recycling:** The project is now complete. The project included the construction of a 16 foot mural made out of plastic caps and lids as part of a week-long earth day celebration at Island View Elementary School. The event was well organized and a huge success. Thanks to all of the partners and volunteers who helped make this a really great community project. Information about the project was posted several times in the paper. The murals will remain on the walls of the Island View Elementary School as a reminder to reduce, reuse and recycle.

Miscellaneous Announcements

- Swinomish Tribe's Annual Blessing of the Fleet and First Salmon Ceremony: Thursday, May 17, 2012 at noon. The luncheon will take place at the Swinomish Gymnasium. Blessing to follow.
- BlueFestival: featuring Captain Charles Moore (*Garbage Gyres, Tsunami Debris, Marine Feedlots & Ocean Stewardship*): Saturday, May 12, 2012 at the Lincoln Theater in Mount Vernon. Doors open at 6:30 p.m.
- One Day University- Fidalgo Shoreline Academy: Saturday June 9, 2012 at the Fidalgo Bay Resort in Anacortes (8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.). <http://fidalgoacademy.eventbrite.com/>
- Skagit MRC/Shannon Point Marine Center Community Beach Seining Event: June 14, 2012 and August 13, 2012 at Ship Harbor.
- Skagit County Fair: August 8-11, 2012.
- Fidalgo Bay Day: September 15, 2012 at the Fidalgo Bay Resort in Anacortes

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m. The next meeting will be held Thursday, June 14, 2012, at the Seafarer's Memorial Park building in Anacortes.



Skagit County Marine Resources Committee

Minutes of the June 14, 2012 meeting held at the Seafarer's Memorial Building

Members Attending: Lori Kyle, Tracy Alker, Erica Pickett, Rachel Benbrook, Rebecca Spurling, Jim Ramaglia, Charles O'Hara, Ivar Dolph, Bob Hyde, Betsy Stevenson, Paul Dinnel

Members Absent: Kevin Bright, Scott Schuyler, Polly Fischer, Christine Woodward, Kari Odden, Neil Borman, Kurt Buchanan

Others Attending: Pete Haase, volunteer; Rebecca Ponzio, Puget Sound Partnership; Mike Sato, Salish Sea Communications; Sasha Horst, NWSC

Call to Order and introductions: Chair Lori Kyle called the meeting to order at 9:12.

Minutes: Approved.

Public Comments: Mike Sato announced that he has established his own consulting firm called Salish Sea Communications Consulting.

Puget Sound Partnership Presentation:

Rebecca Ponzio of the Puget Sound Partnership discussed the Action Agenda, the organizational structure and funding set up for the restoration of Puget Sound. Progress of the agenda has been delayed by public comment. The targets for restoration have been based more on comments than on science. The targets are

1. Chinook/freshwater flows
2. Beaches
3. Shellfish
4. Human health/well being

The Partnership has chosen the following strategic initiatives:

1. Stormwater
2. Shellfish
3. Habitat protection/salmon recovery

The organizational structure chosen by the Partnership is called an LIO or local integrating organization. Typically, such an organization is convened by the county and local tribes and includes representatives from cities and NGOs.

The North Olympic area chose to create an entirely new organization with Jefferson and Clallam counties working together with the tribes to create a large “tent” including land trust and NGO representatives.

Pierce, Mason and Thurston counties have worked together for years on various salmon restoration projects. The LIO in that area is made up of elected representatives from counties and tribes. The group uses an executive steering committee to make decisions.

The Puget Sound Partnership decided that the Whidbey Basin area which was established as a management area some years ago was so large as to be unwieldy, so that Basin has been split into three parts.

Skagit is the least solidified of all the Puget Sound management districts.

The LIO is different from a Watershed Council in that it is more comprehensive and involves a long list of participating agencies and organizations.

Funding is supplied by NOAA and the EPA. The Puget Sound Partnership is moving \$900,000 to support the capacity of Puget Sound MRCs. This money may only be used for administration.

Proposed Property Mitigation at Wyman’s Marina:

Port of Anacortes Executive Director Bob Hyde presented an overview of the Port’s plan to excavate the earth at Wyman’s Marina to make a saltwater lagoon/saltmarsh area east of the existing boat ramp. This project is mitigation for the filling done at the Dakota Creek shipyard. The creation of the .7 acre inlet will cost about \$1 million and is slated to being this fall.

NWSF/NWSC Report:

Rachel Benbrook reported on the NW Straits Commission meeting. Joan Drinkwin is building a database of MRC members and friends along with press contacts. The Foundation Board approved a new work plan and budget.

San Juan County MRC is working on a marine specimen bank to prove what lived here in case of some disaster like an oil spill.

Clallam County is getting swamped with tsunami junk.

The Whatcom MRC is watching the progress of the EIS for the new Port at Cherry Point.

Jefferson County is in the midst of their Shoreline Master Plan update and in a big squabble over whether to permit finfish aquaculture which the state has mandated. Snohomish County is also in the middle of their SMP update.

Penn Cove Seafoods lost over \$50,000 per day because of the sunken abandoned ship near their mussel farm.

Senator Ranker is pushing for legislation to deal with marine debris, forage fish and ocean acidification. The next meeting will be held June 29 at Clallam.

Administrative Report:

Tracy Alker reported that there was approximately \$3700 left in the MRC budget primarily because WSU was unable to invoice for the Beach Watcher coordinator prior to the contract getting signed in April.

Tracy asked that we send mid-year reports with jpg files, a list of partners and volunteer hours for her report to NW Straits.

The group agreed to have Tracy ask Skagit County to fund the Spartina survey with \$3000 and promotion of the car wash kit program with \$2000.

NW Straits director Ginny Broadhurst went to Washington DC to seek funding for tsunami debris clean-up. NW Straits is considering developing a protocol to be followed in the beach clean up and is contemplating using the MRCs to disseminate the information.

Tracy asked the group to consider developing a committee to write grants to fund projects. Joan Drinkwin will be working with Ric Boge to expand our MRC brochure to embrace a case statement that might be used in writing grants.

Tracy asked the group to consider hiring a professional contractor to develop the MRC website rather than an intern as previously discussed. The NWSC and the other MRCs contracted with Mindfly to develop their websites. Mindfly is located in Bellingham.

Project Status & Discussion:

- **WSU Beach Watchers:** Ivar Dolph reported that some funding for the Beach Watcher coordinator is coming from the Trail Tales grant landed by Betty Carteret of Friends of Skagit Beaches. Ivar reported that the Fidalgo Shoreline Academy was very successful, attracting about 70 registrants.

He said that several Beach Watcher projects will continue such as Fidalgo Bay Day and the seminar series in the winter.

- **Community Beach Seining Event:** Paul Dinnel reported that the beach seine at Ship Harbor which was co-sponsored by the MRC and Shannon Point Marine Center was successful with one of the high school science classes in attendance. The data collected about numbers and sizes of fish will be sent to Skagit River Systems Cooperative.
- **Shannon Point Rip Rap Removal:** Paul said that Jim Wiggins estimates the cost of removing the rip rap at Shannon Point via an overland route to be about \$200,000. The Northwest Straits Foundation has a grant to do the next stage in the feasibility study.
- **Native Oyster Restoration:** Puget Sound Restoration Fund will provide some funding to place oyster shell in South Fidalgo Bay. Seeding of native oysters will take place next year at two sites on the Swinomish Reservation, one site at Seafarers' Park and one site in Padilla Bay.

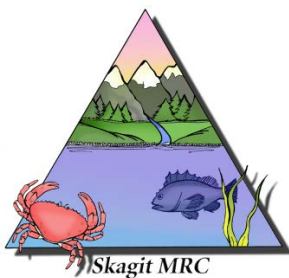
Miscellaneous Announcements:

- Paul noted that there is a derelict boat sunk east of the Guemes Ferry landing. Erica will find out who is in charge.

Meeting adjourned at 11:05.

Respectfully submitted,

Erica Pickett
Secretary pro tem



Skagit County Marine Resources Committee

Minutes of the July 12, 2012 meeting held at the Mount Vernon Senior Center

Members Attending: Lori Kyle, Tracy Alker, Rachel Benbrook, Kari Odden, Neil Borman, Kurt Buchanan, Ivar Dolph, Betsy Stevenson, Paul Dinnel

Members Absent: Erica Pickett, Kevin Bright, Jim Ramaglia, Charles O'Hara, Scott Schuyler, Polly Fischer, Christine Woodward, Bob Hyde, Rebecca Spurling

Others Attending: Pete Haase, citizen; Wendy Steffensen, RE-Sources

Call to Order and Introductions: Lori Kyle began the meeting at 9:05 a.m.

Minutes: Approved with a few minor revisions.

Public Comments: None.

Fidalgo Bay Citizen Stewardship Committee: *presented by Wendy Steffensen, RE-Sources*

The Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve encompasses over 650 acres of state-owned tidelands and bedlands. It is one of seven Aquatic Reserves established by the WA Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to ensure protection of the important unique habitats and species identified in the Puget Sound region. A Citizen Stewardship Committee is being formed for the Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve to help implement DNR's Management Plan for the Reserve. A copy of the Management Plan is available on DNR's website: http://www.dnr.wa.gov/Publications/aqr_rsve_fid_mgmt_plan.pdf.

The following are the management goals established for the Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve:

1. Conserve, at a minimum, and enhance, where there are opportunities, native habitats and associated plant and wildlife species, with a special emphasis on forage fish, salmonids, and migratory birds.
2. Protect and restore the functions and natural processes of nearshore ecosystems in support of the natural resources of the reserve.
3. Promote stewardship of riparian and aquatic habitats and species by providing education and outreach opportunities and promoting coordination with other resource managers.

The Committee will be responsible for helping to protect the Aquatic Reserve by reviewing science, technical work, and management policies, examining public access, and guiding public outreach and education. The Committee will meet at least quarterly and will be supported by staff from RE Sources for Sustainable Communities and People for Puget Sound. So far five people have signed up to be on the Fidalgo Bay Citizen Stewardship Committee. The goal is to have at least 10 people on the Committee before the first meeting. Wendy said she will continue to work with the MRC and Beach Watchers to make sure there is no overlap or duplication of efforts. This project is funded by a grant from WDFW/WDNER awarded to People for Puget Sound. For more information contact: Maddie

Foutch, People For Puget Sound, htrim@pugetsound.org 206-456-3809. Or contact Wendy Steffensen, Lead Scientist, RE Sources, waters@re-sources.org 360- 733-8307.

Forage Fish Survey Training:

Skagit MRC recently received \$1,000 from the Northwest Straits Foundation as part of the Burning Foundation grant to provide forage fish survey training to Beach Watchers and MRC volunteers in 2012. The Foundation contracted with Dan Penttila to lead two 3-4 hour forage fish survey training sessions. The first training session was held July 6, 2012 for nine Beach Watcher volunteers. The training focused on the life history and sampling protocol for surf smelt spawning along the western side of Fidalgo Bay. The next session will be held July 17, 2012 and will provide an opportunity for the Beach Watchers to take the lead and practice what they learned during the first training session. Dan will be there for quality assurance and to answer questions. Samples will be processed in sample jars.

The cost for both training sessions combined is \$600, which leaves \$600 remaining in the budget. Kurt recommended using the remaining funds to pay for processing the forage fish egg samples collected. The eggs would be aged and analyzed for viability. The results would be shared with the Beach Watchers and could be considered as part of the training. MRC members agreed that processing the egg samples is important and would be a good use of the remaining funds. Kurt will contact the Foundation to make sure this task will fit within the grant requirements. If the Burning Foundation grant funds cannot be used for this task then the Skagit Restoration Initiative funding is another option to consider.

Paul suggested expanding the forage fish surveys to Shannon Point as part of the baseline survey for the riprap removal project. Kurt said that we would have to borrow the forage fish survey equipment from the Island County Beach Watchers unless we purchase our own. Paul said that there might be some funding for the riprap removal project that could be used to purchase sieves. Kayaker volunteers could be used to conduct forage fish surveys in some of the more remote locations. Rachel volunteered to map the forage fish survey information with GIS software.

Tideland Acquisition:

Skagit MRC partnered with the state Department of Ecology to purchase a seventy acre parcel of privately owned tidelands in Padilla Bay. The parcel was purchased with Skagit Restoration Initiative funds. The newly acquired parcel will be added to the 12,000 acre Padilla Bay Estuarine Research Reserve where it will be protected and used for education and research. The Reserve has been purchasing properties back from willing landowners over the last 20 years. There are still over 400 acres of privately owned tidelands in Padilla Bay. The acquisition announcement will be published in the Skagit Valley Herald July 17th.

NWSF/NWSC Report:

- The NWSC has started to invite local legislators to meetings on a regular basis. It was suggested that the MRCs invite local legislators to meetings and project sites as well.
- There was some discussion about the possibility of merging our MRCs with the Coastal MRCs. The Coastal MRCs are part of the capital budget and receive state funding. The Coastal MRCs will likely be included as part of the NWSC/MRC conference in November. The Coastal MRC's 2011 annual report is now available online:
http://wdfw.wa.gov/about/volunteer/mrc/files/2011_mrc_annual_report.pdf.
- The coastal communities are currently working on a marine debris response plan. The tsunami debris information and reporting hotline can be found on Ecology's website:
http://www.ecy.wa.gov/news/2012/itn01_debris.html.
- Ginny is working on a partnership with the Padilla Bay Research Reserve to develop a tsunami debris monitoring plan that will involve the MRCs. The plan will prioritize shorelines to be surveyed by trained volunteers. Rachel said that kayakers would be a great way to survey some of the more remote shorelines for debris. Lori said that she would be willing to take volunteers out in her boat to help with the surveys.
- Olympia oyster restoration work is currently taking place in Sequim Bay in Clallam County. Oyster seed planting occurred July 5th with oyster seed produced by Fidalgo Bay oysters. The project is being supported by the Puget Sound Partnership and Puget Sound Restoration funds.

- There are currently six Local Integrating Organizations (LIOs) that are now up and running. Rachel sent an email that showed the different ways that the LIOs are each structured.
- In response to the proposed coal terminal, the NWSC drafted a letter requesting the preparation of a programmatic Environmental Impact Statement. Tracy forwarded the letter to MRC members.
- The forage fish research symposium will be held September 13-14 at Friday Harbor Labs.
- Sasha offered to provide social marketing training for MRC members. Contact Sasha if you are interested in the training.

Administrative Report:

- Tracy thanked Erica for taking the minutes at the last MRC meeting and the project leads for submitting their project reports on time.
- The Skagit MRC grant has been amended to include \$60k from the PSP/EPA for MRC Operations which became available July 1, 2012. Some of the funding will be used to update and print the MRC brochures and to hire a contractor to set up the MRC website. The amended grant expires June 30, 2013.
- The contract with People for Puget Sound for Spartina surveys is currently going through the County's internal signature process.
- The Car Wash Kit Promotion project will be put on hold until the early spring of 2013, during the beginning of the car wash fundraising season.
- The NWSC/MRC Conference survey is due this Friday. MRC members were interested in possibly donating an experience to the silent auction, but were not interested in putting together another basket of donated local goods. Paul volunteered to give a presentation on the Fidalgo Bay native oyster restoration project. Rachel offered to provide a poster on the Spartina survey program.
- The Foundation is interested in approaching local businesses who might be interested in sponsoring the conference. MRC members suggested contacting the Port of Anacortes as well as the Shell and Tesoro oil refineries.
- MRC members discussed the frequent poor meeting attendance and the failure to meet the requirements of a quorum. The MRC will need to consider whether or not to request that some members become Ex-Officio members.

Project Status & Discussion:

- **WSU Beach Watchers:** MRC funding for the Beach Watcher program ended June 30, 2012. There is still some funding for the Beach Watcher Coordinator from the Trail Tales program. There has been some discussion about placing the Beach Watcher Coordinator position under the Padilla Bay Research Reserve. They have the office space, but do not have the funding to fully support the position. Ivar and Erica would like to work with the local schools to coordinate educational field trips to the beach. Before the students ever step foot on the beach, Beach Naturalists would go to the classrooms to teach proper beach etiquette and potential impacts to marine life. Ivar would also like to work with the City to try to manage the number of school kids allowed on the beach at any one time. Too many unsupervised and un-informed students could potentially cause a lot of damage to the beach and the marine creatures that live there.
- **Community Beach Seining Event:** The community beach seining event at Ship Harbor took place June 14, 2012. 40-50 people attended the event including several Beach Watcher volunteers and Shannon Point Marine Center staff, students, and public. They caught lots of fish including lots of juvenile salmon (pink, coho, and Chinook). The final report has been completed and submitted. The next event will occur August 13, 2012 and will be funded by the NWSF's Burning Foundation grant.
- **Native Oyster Restoration:** The Fidalgo Bay native oyster restoration program is currently being supported by Northwest Straits Foundation and Skagit Restoration Initiative funds. Sampling is in progress. So far, 19 volunteers have contributed 172 volunteer hours collecting 500 samples over a seven day period. An intern will provide a very detailed map of the trestle survey area substrate type (e.g., oyster shells, clam shells, number of native oysters) to use as a baseline to monitor future changes. Volunteers will be needed to help with additional sampling. Northwest Straits Foundation and Skagit Restoration Initiative funds are

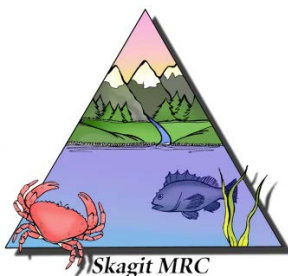
being used to distribute additional oyster shell and for producing oyster seed. The oyster seed will be ready to go out late this summer or next spring. The Trail Tales docents are sharing the information about Fidalgo Bay native oyster restoration work with the public. Paul will also be giving a presentation on the native oyster restoration program.

- **Shannon Point Riprap Removal:** The initial draft feasibility analysis for the removal of rock riprap on the western shore of Shannon Point has been completed and includes recommendations for the next steps. Additional grant funding from the Northwest Straits Foundation will be used to take the next step with the feasibility study.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** Fidalgo Bay Day will be held September 15, 2012 at the Fidalgo Bay RV Park. Event planning and volunteer coordination is currently underway.
- **Plastic Cap Recycling:** The project is now complete. The project included the construction of a 16 foot mural made out of plastic caps and lids as part of a week-long earth day celebration at Island View Elementary School. The event was well organized and a huge success. Thanks to all of the partners and volunteers who helped make this a really great community project. Information about the project was posted several times in the paper. The murals will remain on the walls of the Island View Elementary School as a reminder to reduce, reuse and recycle.

Miscellaneous Announcements:

- Neil Borman will be moving to Boulder, Colorado in August to be closer to his family. Unfortunately this means that he will be resigning his position on the MRC as well as the Skagit County Flood Control Zone District Environmental Technical Committee. Neil has been a very important asset to the MRC and the Skagit County community and will be greatly missed. Best of luck Neil!
- Birders will be out conducting bird surveys around the San Juan Islands next week.
- The second forage fish survey training for Beach Watchers will occur July 17, 2012. MRC members are welcome to attend.
- The next Community Beach Seining Event will occur August 13, 2012 from 2:00 to 4:00 PM at Ship Harbor. Call Paul Dinnel (360-299-8468) for additional information.
- Skagit County Fair: August 8-11, 2012.
- Fidalgo Bay Day: September 15, 2012 at the Fidalgo Bay Resort in Anacortes.

The meeting adjourned at 10:55 a.m. The next meeting will be held Thursday, August 9, 2012, location TBD.



Skagit County Marine Resources Committee

Minutes of the August 9, 2012 meeting held at the Fidalgo Bay RV Park

Members Attending: Lori Kyle, Tracy Alker, Erica Pickett, Neil Borman, Kurt Buchanan, Ivar Dolph, Betsy Stevenson, Paul Dinnel, Jim Ramaglia, Charles O'Hara, Christine Woodward

Members Absent: Rachel Benbrook, Kari Odden, Kevin Bright, Scott Schuyler, Polly Fischer, Bob Hyde, Rebecca Spurling

Others Attending: Nancy Olsen, WSU Beach Watchers; Joan Drinkwin, Northwest Straits Foundation; Ginny Broadhurst, Northwest Straits Commission; Austin Rose, Skagit Citizen; Morty Cohen, WSU Beach Watchers; Jay Lind, Citizen; Steve Hinton, Skagit River Systems Cooperative

Call to Order and Introductions: Lori Kyle began the meeting at 9:05 a.m.

Minutes: Approved with a few minor revisions.

Public Comments: None.

The Smokehouse Floodplain SRT Project: *presented by Steve Hinton, SRSC*

The Smokehouse Floodplain Self Regulating Tide Gate (SRT) project, formerly known as the Fornsby Creek SRT/, is a fish passage and habitat restoration project located along the northern Swinomish Channel of the Skagit River delta. It is also the location of an ancestral village and traditional fishing grounds of the Swinomish tribe. Funding partners for this project include the Swinomish Tribal community, the Salmon Recovery Funding Board, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The project site was originally ~149 acres of a complex network of channels and estuarine marsh until it was converted to agricultural land with the installation of dikes and tide gates. The hydraulic modifications resulted in the loss of over 90% of the estuarine marsh and prevented fish passage. Only a small network of remnant channels remained intact (~5 linear miles, 18 acres). A large portion of the agricultural land was recently returned to tribal control. The goal of this project is to restore tidal influence to the channels, increase estuarine habitat, and enable fish passage for all salmonid species. The Skagit River System Cooperative's (SRSC) restoration plan for the site included replacing the impassible tide gates with self regulating tide gates, channel modification, and approximately 70 acres of native plantings. The monitoring plan included pre- and post-construction biological, hydraulic, geomorphic, and vegetation monitoring. The Swinomish also worked with landowners to make sure they can still farm the land. To address concerns regarding salt water intrusion in the groundwater, several monitoring wells were installed to make sure the crops won't be harmed during irrigation. Seven years of post-project monitoring data indicate that the project site is now thriving with diverse marine life. The channels have become an important nursery habitat for salmonids and Dungeness crabs.

Northwest Straits Commission Report:

- The next meeting is August 24th 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. at Padilla Bay. MRC members are encouraged to attend.
- The Snohomish MRC and WDFW gave a presentation on the Mussel Watch program. The Mussel Watch program is part of a nationwide monitoring program overseen by NOAA to analyze the contaminants in the water. Jim West from WDFW is interested in expanding the program throughout the Northwest Straits region. A new sampling technique has been developed for areas where it is difficult to find enough viable sources of mussels to sample. The new sampling technique involves placing farmed mussels (Penn Cove) in cages set in strategic locations. They are now looking for partners to help recruit volunteers to help set the cages and sample the mussels. Lori said that Kristi Carpenter, who works for the Skagit Conservation District, has a group of volunteers who sample shellfish to test for paralytic shellfish toxins who might also be interested in helping out with the Mussel Watch program. An "adopt a cage" program is also being considered. It will require a small fee for additional locations. This could be a great fundraising opportunity and potential MRC project in partnership with local jurisdictions. To learn more about the Snohomish MRC's Mussel Watch program visit their website: <http://www.snocomrc.org/Projects/Science/Mussel-Watch.aspx>.
- Island MRC is in the process of testing the first samples from their phytoremediation project to see if the trees that were planted a couple of years ago have been successful in removing pollutants. To learn more about the phytoremediation project visit their website: <http://www.islandcountymrc.org/Projects/Marine-Water-Quality/Phytoremediation-Bioswale.aspx>
- Snohomish MRC Recreational Crabber Subcommittee is working with WSU Beach Watchers and WDFW to design an educational display that will be placed in 100 stores in 8 counties in the NWS region.
- The NWSC is working on a sustainability plan since funding is uncertain beyond June 30, 2013. Key pieces of the plan will be looking to different government and non-government sources and considering some new ways of doing business. It will be increasingly important for MRCs to find some local financial support for MRC operations. Some MRCs might want to consider doing some kind of fundraising activities.
- NWSC members Terri Klinger and Terry Williams are both on the Governor's panel on Ocean Acidification and are currently drafting recommendations on public education and outreach, adaptations and recommendation, source control (for local inputs), and research and monitoring. It is anticipated that the draft report will be completed by October 2012.

Northwest Straits Foundation Report:

- Joan is working with a communications consultant to look at producing some outreach/communication documents about the NWSI and the MRCs. It will need to be determined what the most appropriate format would be. Some of the different options being considered include: simple "elevator speech" language, small note cards, a multi page brochure, etc.
- We will continue to have the support of the NWSF for project funding. However, capacity funds will have to be sought out by all MRCs to some extent, depending on what kind of support we may get from the county in the future.

Potential Grant Opportunities:

The MRC discussed several potential grant opportunities forwarded by Joan.

- Oil spill preparedness, response, and restoration activities (\$185,000)
The maximum individual grant amount is \$30,000 to \$60,000. The application deadline is: Sept. 14, 2012. This grant is only available for certain areas including: west of Deception Pass, north of Admiralty Inlet, and east of Cape Flattery. This could be a good opportunity to partner with the other MRCs as a regional project. The grant even mentions coordinating with the MRCs. Although the Port of Anacortes and the refineries already have an excellent oil spill preparedness and response program already in place in Skagit County, the grant will provide a funding opportunity for additional outreach and education.
- Puget Sound Marine & Nearshore Grant: Beach Restoration (\$2.7 million)

ESRPs Request for Proposals is anticipated to go out August 17, 2012. Pre-proposals are due September 21, 2012. Lori proposed the MRC apply for the grant to remove riprap at Bowman Bay State Park. Lori said that Tom Slocum would help with the survey. The Northwest Straits Foundation would help with the grant application. The MRC agreed that this was worth looking into. A subcommittee was formed to develop the proposal: Lori, Christine, Kurt, and Erica. This could also be a great grant opportunity for the Shannon Point Rip Rap Removal project.

- Natural resource restoration actions that will provide tangible benefits to Surf Scoters (\$800,000): either on their breeding grounds, wintering grounds (ideally in San Francisco Bay), or at migration stopover points. The application deadline is September 28, 2012. The MRC concluded that this grant opportunity wouldn't be applicable for Skagit County.

Administrative Report:

- The MRC progress reports and the Semi-Annual report have been completed. The next progress reports are due in October.
- Ric Boge invited a member of the MRC to briefly address the Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve Committee (maybe 20-30 minutes or so) about what the MRC has accomplished and is currently focused on. Erica volunteered to give the presentation to the group in October.
- Neil is moving to Boulder, Colorado in August to be closer to his family. Lori presented Neil with a certificate of appreciation for his six years of dedicated service. In addition, Neil was presented with one of Jim's beautiful underwater photographs. Neil has been an active member of the Skagit MRC since 2006. He served as the MRC Chair for two years in a row, served as the Chair on the Skagit Restoration Initiative Subcommittee, served as the Skagit MRC representative on the NWSC, and represented the Skagit MRC on the Skagit County Flood Control Zone District Environmental Technical Committee. He will be greatly missed.
- A contractor will be hired to create a new website for the Skagit MRC. Please let Tracy know if you would be interested in helping to maintain the website.
- Several things will need to be discussed at a future meeting including: low meeting attendance, ex-officio MRC memberships, updating the 5-yr Strategic Plan, and building a case statement. We will need to identify measureable goals and how we plan to get there. We will also need to decide how and if the MRC is to continue with no funding after June 30, 2013.

MRC Applicant (Jay Lind)

- Jay Lind submitted an application to become a member of the Skagit MRC. Jay is a third generation seafood processor and belongs to the Puget Sound Anglers/Anacortes chapter. The consensus of the MRC was to approve Jay's membership. If approved by the Board of County Commissioners, Jay would like to represent the commercial or sport fishing industry on the Skagit MRC. Welcome aboard Jay!

Project Status & Discussion:

- **WSU Beach Watchers:** There is no more funding to support the core Beach Watcher program. They are currently looking into different program structuring options and a more stable source of funding to keep the program going. There is still some project specific funding for the Beach Watcher Coordinator for the Trail Tales program, the Clean Samish Initiative, and crabber education this year. The Trail Tales docents will be meeting on August 23, 2012 at the Seafarer's Memorial Park building to learn more about projects at Fidalgo Bay and Ecology's clean-up efforts along the Anacortes waterfront. MRC members are welcome to attend.
- **Community Beach Seining Event:** The community beach seining event at Ship Harbor took place June 14, 2012. 40-50 people attended the event including several Beach Watcher volunteers and Shannon Point Marine Center staff, students, and public. They caught lots of fish including lots of juvenile salmon (pink, coho, and Chinook). The final report has been completed and submitted. The NWSF's Burning Foundation grant provided funding for an additional community beach seining event which will be held August 13, 2012. Please contact Paul Dinnel if you are interested in volunteering.
- **Native Oyster Restoration:** The Fidalgo Bay native oyster restoration program is currently being supported by Northwest Straits Foundation and Skagit Restoration Initiative funds.

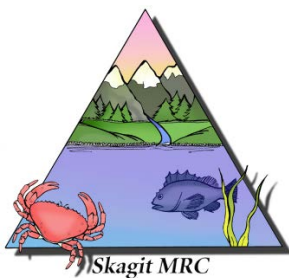
Sampling is underway. Close to 1000 samples have been collected at the trestle site and showed signs of light spawning. An intern working under the COSEE (Center for Ocean Sciences and Education Excellence) program will prepare the report including a map of the substrate data at the trestle sample site. This data will be used as the baseline to monitor future changes. Northwest Straits Foundation and Skagit Restoration Initiative funds will be used to distribute ~50 cubic yards of additional oyster shell next spring. The Trail Tales docents will share the information about Fidalgo Bay native oyster restoration work with the public.

- **Shannon Point Rip Rap Removal:** The initial draft feasibility analysis for the removal of rock riprap on the western shore of Shannon Point has been completed and includes recommendations for the next steps. Additional grant funding from the Northwest Straits Foundation will be used to enhance the feasibility study and take the next step.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** Fidalgo Bay Day will be held September 15, 2012 at the Fidalgo Bay RV Park. Tracy agreed to set up the MRC display. Kari will help with the children's activities. This year's event will be funded by the Northwest Straits Foundation's Burning Foundation grant.
- **Spartina Surveys:** Spartina surveys will be paid for through funding from the Skagit County Clean Water funds (originally budgeted to cover staff time). The contract with People for Puget Sound has been signed and the recruitment and training of volunteers is underway.
- **Forage Fish Survey Training:** Skagit MRC recently received \$1,000 from the Northwest Straits Foundation as part of the Burning Foundation grant to provide forage fish survey training to Beach Watchers and MRC volunteers in 2012. The Foundation contracted with Dan Penttila to lead two 3-4 hour forage fish survey training sessions. The first training session was held July 6, 2012 for Beach Watcher volunteers. The training focused on the life history and sampling protocol for surf smelt spawning along the western side of Fidalgo Bay. The second session was held July 17, 2012 and provided an opportunity for the Beach Watchers to take the lead and practice what they learned during the first training session. Dan was there for quality assurance and to answer questions. The twelve trained Beach Watchers will continue to conduct practice surveys at seven sites over two week intervals through September 11, 2012. Forage fish egg samples will be collected and analyzed.
- **Weaverling Spit Beach Restoration:** A preconstruction meeting will be held at the end of August. All of the permits are in place. The next phase of beach restoration construction will start in early September. The kiosk at the Fidalgo Bay RV Park will have project information. This project is being supported by Skagit Restoration Initiative funds.

Miscellaneous Events and Announcements:

- Skagit County Fair: August 8-11, 2012.
- Community Beach Seining Day: August 13, 2012 at Ship Harbor from 2:00 to 4:00 PM. Contact Paul Dinnel (360-299-8468) for additional information.
- International Forage Fish Symposium: September 13 -14, 2012 at Friday Harbor Labs. Contact Caroline Gibson if you are interested in attending: Gibson@nwstraits.org.
- Fidalgo Bay Day: September 15, 2012 at the Fidalgo Bay Resort in Anacortes.
- Annual NWSC/MRC Conference: November 4-5, 2012, at Port Townsend.

The meeting adjourned at 11:05 a.m. The next meeting will be held Thursday, September 13, 2012, at the Mount Vernon Senior Center.



Skagit County Marine Resources Committee

Minutes of the September 13, 2012 meeting held at the Mount Vernon Senior Center

Members Attending: Lori Kyle, Tracy Alker, Erica Pickett, Rachel Benbrook, Ivar Dolph, Christine Woodward, Jay Lind

Members Absent: Kurt Buchanan, Kari Odden, Kevin Bright, Scott Schuyler, Polly Fischer, Bob Hyde, Rebecca Spurling, Betsy Stevenson, Paul Dinnel, Jim Ramaglia, Charles O'Hara

Others Attending: Morty Cohen, WSU Beach Watchers; Joan Drinkwin, Northwest Straits Foundation; Ginny Broadhurst, Northwest Straits Commission; Kara Cardinal, WA Sea Grant/TNC; Kevin Anderson, WA DNR; Jesse Sayles, Arizona State University; Pete Haase, citizen volunteer; Teri Switalski, Port of Anacortes

Call to Order and Introductions: Lori Kyle began the meeting at 9:05 a.m.

Minutes: Approved

Public Comments: None

Draft Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative Sustainability Plan:

- The capacity funding that the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative (NWSI) and MRCs received from the Puget Sound Partnership will expire June 30, 2013. Out of concern for future funding and sustainability of the NWSI, Ginny, with input from the Northwest Straits Commission, drafted the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative Sustainability Plan. The Plan focuses on the need to diversify funding sources (i.e. local, private, corporate, state, federal, etc.). Each MRC will need to become active in seeking capacity funding. The Sustainability Plan suggests that each MRC seek \$20,000 in local financial support. Receiving local financial support will also help to lend credibility when seeking state and federal financial support. Any capacity funding can also be used to help leverage other sources of funding for projects. Local financial support varies for each MRC. Some MRCs get financial support from their counties while others do not. Skagit MRC is very fortunate in that the County is providing staff support at least through the end of 2013.
- Ginny is seeking state legislative support for the NWSI and the MRCs. The goal is for each MRC in the Northwest Straits region to receive the same level of support from the state as coastal MRCs. The four coastal MRCs currently each receive \$38,500 from the state. Ginny will demonstrate to the legislators that supporting the NWSI is a good investment. She will provide a list of projects with anticipated costs to show exactly what will be done with the money. MRC members should also get in contact with local legislators to help strengthen support for the NWSI and MRCs.

- Most of the public is still unaware of what the MRCs and NWSI are all about. It is important to communicate a unified vision among the MRCs. To help with this, the Foundation is creating fact sheets and flyers for the NWSI and MRCs for distribution at outreach events. They will provide bullet points that define the structure, role, mission, and goals. The fact sheets will also provide project examples and ways to support the local MRCs. Ric Boge, a Beach Watcher volunteer, will help develop similar fact sheets that are specific to the Skagit MRC. Ric is also updating the Skagit MRC's multi-page brochure "A Report to the Community" which will include the same talking points. These fact sheets and flyers will also be useful tools for training new MRC members and updating the Commissioners. There is around \$2,000 in the MRC budget for printing flyers and brochures.
- It is very important to garner support from our local officials, particularly through face to face communications on a more regular basis. Providing updates to the Commissioners on a regular basis will help increase visibility of the MRC and will help when seeking state and federal financial support. The Skagit MRC plans to give a presentation sometime this year to update the County Commissioners and to thank them for their continued support. Lori suggested making a proclamation for a special day or month such as World Oceans Day or National Estuaries Restoration Day, Earth Day, etc. that can be used as a reminder about the important work of the MRC.

Northwest Straits Commission Report:

- 10th District State Representative, Norma Smith, attended the meeting that was held at the Padilla Bay reserve in Skagit County. Representative Smith serves on the Ocean Acidification Blue Ribbon Panel and is very support of the NWSI and the MRCs. She pointed out that most people are unaware of ocean acidification threats and issues, so outreach and education is very important. Recommendations from the Panel will be used to develop a public outreach communication plan.
- The annual MRC conference will be held November 2-3 in Port Townsend at the Northwest Maritime Center. Conference registration information has been sent to MRC members. All MRC members are encouraged to attend at least part of the conference. Northwest Straits Commission will coordinate to place MRC members with local hosts who offer accommodations and will reimburse for travel/lodging if MRCs cannot afford it. MRC members are responsible for arranging their own lodging and registration. The current per diem for lodging is \$93. Please save your receipts for reimbursement! Guests will be required to pay for their own food.
- The Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) Mussel Watch Pilot Project Expansion program includes 80 sampling sites in the Northwest Straits region. Sampling sites will be identified September-October. Cages with mussels will be installed in November. The mussels and cages will be retrieved in January – February and sent to Olympia for analysis. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is sponsoring additional mussel cages in all of the DNR Aquatic Reserves. Anyone can sponsor a mussel cage for around \$1,350 for each additional location. Volunteers would be needed to monitor the cages.
- Tsunami Debris will soon be coming to the beaches of Washington State. State Representative Norma Smith suggested that instead of throwing away the Tsunami Debris, which can be very expensive, we need to ask how we can make it work for us. We should work with other organizations to try to figure out a way to clean up the material and turn it into a business commodity.
- The next NWSC meeting will be in Bellingham on the 28th where they will be selecting the new Director for the Northwest Straits Foundation. 31 applications were received for the position. A committee was formed to help sort through the applications and narrow it down to the four final applicants. Ivar served on the interview committee where he contributed at least 30 hours sorting through all of the applications and conducting interviews. Thank you Ivar!!

Oil spill preparedness, response, and restoration activities Grant Proposal:

- The Northwest Straits Foundation is working with the San Juan MRC to apply for the oil spill preparedness grant. The proposal was expanded into a regional project that will involve several MRCs. The San Juan MRC Coordinator, Linda Lyshall, requested a letter of support

from all of the MRCs who are interested in participating. The tasks in the grant proposal that would involve the Skagit MRC include:

- Public workshops to raise awareness about the oil spill response programs already in place and what folks can do to help. A private contractor will be hired to organize and manage the workshops to raise public awareness in each county.
 - Baseline data collection training.
- Skagit MRC members expressed some concerns about the workshops and baseline data collection in the proposal. Several MRC members questioned whether the public would even be interested in attending a workshop on oil spill preparedness and response, especially since citizens can't be involved in oil spill response without HAZWOPER certification. In addition, because citizen scientists will be collecting the baseline data, MRC members were concerned about the protocols and quality assurance and quality control (QAQC) for the baseline data collection. The baseline data is critical and the methods used to collect the data must be accepted by the oil companies and must be able to stand up in a court of law. Who will oversee the work to make sure it is being done correctly? At what level will scientists be involved to ensure top notch data collection? Joan said that the ultimate goal is to use the protocol and QAQC methods that will meet the requirements to stand up in court. QAQC will be used throughout developing the protocol, during training and during the actual data collection. Christine said that the Samish Indian Nation staff went through a rigorous 40-hour HAZWOPER training and data collection training through the Department of Ecology. Christine said that she would be willing to provide some guidance for developing the training module for the MRCs since she has already been through the process. The question as to where the baseline samples will be kept is still unclear. Joan said that there are still a lot of details that will need to be worked out if we do get the grant.
- The grant proposal is due this Friday, September 14. Unfortunately, there weren't enough MRC members in attendance for a quorum. Without a consensus, the Skagit MRC was unable to make the decision regarding the grant proposal or the letter of support. Joan said that she would include language in the proposal that would allow the Skagit MRC to have an "out" if the grant gets approved and the Skagit MRC decides they do not want to be involved.
- Jane, the Coordinator for the Coastal Observation and Seabird Survey Team (COASST) program is also submitting a proposal. Their proposal includes HAZWOPER training for COASST volunteers for post-spill work, developing a COASST response protocol and a guide for agencies/MRCs which documents COASST resources available during large spills. They requested Skagit MRC's permission to incorporate their list of trained volunteers into Skagit MRC's oil spill plans/documents. Tracy contacted Jane to let her know that Skagit MRC does not have any oil spill plans or documents. MRC members agreed that it would be great to have a central location for a list of trained volunteers and other resources for oil spills. MRC members also pointed out that it is difficult to keep a strong volunteer base in place for oil spill response because of the annual HAZWOPER certification that is required. The HAZWOPER classes can be expensive and time consuming. In addition, there are already plenty of organizations in Skagit County who have trained staff and resources already in place in case of an oil spill including the Anacortes oil refineries, the Port, and the tribes.

Puget Sound Marine & Nearshore Grant: Bowman Bay Rip Rap Removal Proposal:

- The Northwest Straits Foundation is working with the Skagit MRC and State Parks to apply for the grant for the removal of rip rap at Bowman Bay in Deception Pass State Park. Pre-proposals are due September 21, 2012. A subcommittee was formed to develop the proposal: Lori, Christine, Kurt, and Erica. Lori arranged a meeting with the Skagit Conservation District, State Parks and Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group. Lori and Joan also made several site visits. Tom completed the survey and is working on a conceptual design and cost estimate. There was a discussion about the partnering with the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group to help with the native planting. The hope is that removing the bulkhead will restore sediment transport processes, improve nearshore habitat for salmon and forage fish, and improve public access and outreach opportunities. State Parks is very supportive of the project.

Administrative Report:

- The next Progress reports are due October 15. Please send Tracy project updates, match funds, donations, and volunteer hours.
- Poor meeting attendance continues to be an issue. Important decisions cannot be made without a quorum. Lori sent a letter to all of the committee members to remind everybody about the importance of their participation. If it continues to be a problem, we will need to make the tough decision to remove the inactive members from the MRC roster or allow them to become ex-officio members.
- A contractor will be hired to create a new website for the Skagit MRC. Please let Tracy know if you would be interested in helping to review the design and maintain the website.

Whidbey Basin Restoration Survey: Jesse Sayles, a PhD student from Arizona State University, is conducting a research project in collaboration with the University of Washington. He is studying how restoration is coordinated and implemented in the Whidbey Basin and if there is sustainability and resilience of these efforts. Jesse is interested in interviewing one or two MRC members to learn about the MRC's goals and how the MRC collaborates and implements restoration projects. The online survey will take approximately 30 minutes and the interview will take approximately one hour. All information will be kept confidential. At the end of the study, participants will be sent a summary of the research findings and PDF copies of all scientific publications from the study. Jesse offered to present the results to the MRC sometime next year. The hope is that the findings from this study will contribute to improved restoration and resource management approaches, policies, or procedures.

People for Puget Sound Update:

- Rachel announced that People for Puget Sound (PPS) will be officially closing its doors October 1, 2012. The plan is to continue their programs under two different organizations. The policy and education programs will go to the Washington Environmental Council and the restoration projects will be moved to EarthCorps. EarthCorps is also considering taking over PPS's Restore America's Estuaries membership, to maintain national recognition in the northern Puget Sound region. They hope that the PPS staff will be transitioned over to those two organizations as well.
- Rachel expressed interest in continuing to be a part of the MRC and NWSC as a citizen volunteer for as long as possible. If Rachel starts working for EarthCorps, she hopes that she will be able to represent them on the MRC. Christine volunteered to become the NWSC representative if Rachel is unable to continue. Rachel will provide all of the MRC-related hard data to Tracy to file with the rest of the MRC documents.
- Rachel discussed one of People for Puget Sound's new projects that involves looking at the coastal blue carbon potential (i.e. the ability to sequester carbon) of the Snohomish estuary once it is restored. The project is funded through NOAA and Restore America's Estuaries. Additional funding is needed to do biomass studies to measure the amount of carbon stored in the vegetation in key estuaries. Maybe this could be a future MRC project? Recent studies indicate that coastal habitats have the ability to sequester and store large amounts of carbon from the atmosphere, thus decreasing the effects of global warming. The destruction of coastal habitat not only loses the capacity to sequester carbon, but the carbon that was stored in the soil will get released back into the atmosphere. The hope is that the carbon value of these habitats could earn carbon credits after restoration. The carbon credits could then be traded for market value to provide a sustainable funding source for more restoration work.

Project Status & Discussion:

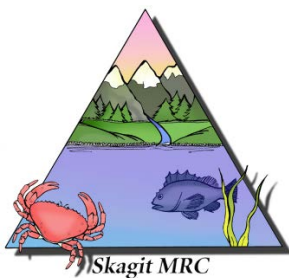
- **WSU Beach Watchers:** The Trail Tales docents met on August 23, 2012 at the Seafarer's Memorial Park building to learn more about projects at Fidalgo Bay and Ecology's clean-up efforts along the Anacortes waterfront. A Trail Tale's interpretive walk will be held at 10:00 a.m. at the Tommy Thompson trail to coincide with Fidalgo Bay Day. The walk will focus on 100 years of mill operations at the former Custom Plywood Mill site.
- **Community Beach Seining Event:** The NWSF's Burning Foundation grant provided funding for a community beach seining event that was held August 13, 2012 at Ship Harbor. No other community beach seining events are planned this year.
- **Native Oyster Restoration:** No report

- **Shannon Point Rip Rap Removal:** The NWSF received a grant from the USFWS for the MRC's Shannon Point Rip Rap removal project. Joan, Paul, and Tracy will meet with the City of Anacortes to get some clarification regarding the expansion of the Tommy Thompson Trail and potential re-use of the rock.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** Fidalgo Bay Day will be held September 15, 2012 at the Fidalgo Bay RV Park. This year's event will be funded by the Northwest Straits Foundation's Burning Foundation grant.
- **Spartina Surveys:** Rachel plans to finish the Spartina work this month. The islands in Samish Bay were surveyed. A lot of Spartina was found around the Dredge Islands. The current is strong in that area, so there is great potential for the seed to spread if the Spartina isn't taken care of soon. The County and State noxious weed specialists will be notified. Rachel also noted that there large amounts of purple loosestrife at the North Fork of the Skagit Delta that could become problematic.
- **Forage Fish Survey Training:** Eleven to twelve trained Beach Watchers completed the practice surveys at the seven sites over two week intervals through September 11, 2012. Someone from the press stopped by while they were conducting surveys and took a picture for the paper. Forage fish egg samples were collected and are being analyzed. The analysis should be complete in October. Additional survey sights will be identified and prioritized.
- **Weaverling Spit Beach Restoration:** The base layer of the beach restoration project will be finished by the end of next week. The kiosk at the Fidalgo Bay RV Park contains project information. Christine will bring a project poster to the MRC conference. Christine invited the MRC for a site visit during the next MRC meeting in October.

Miscellaneous Events and Announcements:

- International Forage Fish Symposium: September 13 -14, 2012 at Friday Harbor Labs.
- Fidalgo Bay Day: September 15, 2012 at the Fidalgo Bay Resort in Anacortes.
- Annual NWSC/MRC Conference: November 4-5, 2012, at Port Townsend. Don't forget to register
- Skagit Climate Science Workshop- October 17, 2012, 9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. at the WSU-Mount Vernon Northwester WA Research and Extension Center. Please confirm your attendance with the Skagit Watershed Council by October 16. Call (360) 419-9326 or e-mail Shirley at solomon@skagitwatershed.org.
- Restore America's Estuaries (RAE): The annual national conference will be held in Tampa Florida October 20-25, 2012.
- DNR has \$13M in the Capital Budget Jobs Act for Puget Sound Conservation Corps crews to work on marine, nearshore, and upland restoration projects located in WRIAs 1 -19. DNR has a crew of six people available to help with projects in Skagit County for a period of 36 days and they are looking for partners.
- The Skagit Watershed Council is dissolving and will no longer be the Lead Entity for WRIA 3. The Puget Sound Partnership's Local Integrating Organization (LIO) for Skagit County will likely become the Lead Entity for WRIA 3. The LIO for Skagit County is yet to be determined. There has been some discussion that the LIO will be the Skagit Council of Governments (SCOG).

The meeting adjourned at 11:40 a.m. The next meeting will be held Thursday, October 11, 2012, at the Fidalgo Bay RV Park.



Skagit County Marine Resources Committee

Minutes of the October 11, 2012 meeting held at the Fidalgo Bay RV Park

Members Attending: Lori Kyle, Tracy Alker, Erica Pickett, Rachel Benbrook, Christine Woodward, Jay Lind, Kari Odden, Kurt Buchanan, Bob Hyde, Paul Dinnel, Jim Ramaglia

Members Absent: Kevin Bright, Scott Schuyler, Polly Fischer, Rebecca Spurling, Betsy Stevenson, Charles O'Hara, Ivar Dolph

Others Attending: Morty Cohen, WSU Beach Watcher Volunteer; Joan Drinkwin, Northwest Straits Foundation; Pete Haase, citizen volunteer; Sharon Riggs, Padilla Bay; Ric Boge, WSU Beach Watcher Volunteer

Call to Order and Introductions: Lori Kyle began the meeting at 9:05 a.m.

Minutes: Approved

Public Comments: None

Northwest Straits Commission Report:

- **Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) Director:** The Northwest Straits Commission did not have a regular Commission meeting in September. The four finalists for the Northwest Straits Foundation Director's position gave presentations. The Northwest Straits Commission selected Robyn du Pre as the new Foundation Director. Robyn will be able to lend her expertise in fundraising to help the MRCs with their fundraising tactics.
- The next NWSC meeting will be held Friday, November 2 before the MRC conference in Port Townsend.
- **MRC Conference:** The annual MRC conference will be held November 2-3 in Port Townsend at the Northwest Maritime Center. All MRC members are encouraged to attend at least part of the conference. The current per diem for lodging is \$93. Please save your receipts for reimbursement! Skagit MRC members will be donating the following items for the silent auction:
 - Padilla Bay sweatshirt (Paul Dinnel)
 - Beautiful marine life photos printed on mugs, poster board and canvas (Jim Ramaglia)
 - A two-night stay in the park model at the Fidalgo Bay RV Park (Christine Woodward)
 - Skagit Land Trust book Natural Skagit: A Journey from Mountains to Sea (Kari Odden)
 - A three night stay in a beachfront cabin at the Guemes Island Resort (Rachel Benbrook)

Thank you Paul, Jim, Christine, Kari, and Rachel for these outstanding donations! Way to go Skagit!

- Oil Spill Strategy Workshop: An oil spill strategy workshop will be held in Port Townsend November 1, one day before the MRC Conference. Christine said that she plans to attend the workshop and offered to give a report on the workshop at the next MRC meeting in November.

Administrative Report:

- MRC Conference Slideshow Photos: Ginny has requested photos that reflect some of the MRC's proudest moments. The photos will be used in a slideshow at the MRC conference. Please send photos to Tracy that you would like to include in the slideshow. The photos can be new or old.
- Progress Reports: The next Progress reports are due October 15. Please send Tracy your volunteer hours for all MRC related activities including MRC projects funded by different grants (e.g. forage fish surveys, Fidalgo Bay Day, community beach seining, native oyster restoration, etc.) as well as grant proposal preparation, workshops, trainings, meetings, and presentations.
- MRC Meeting Attendance: Poor meeting attendance continues to be an issue. Important decisions cannot be made without a quorum or consensus. Lori sent a letter via e-mail to all of the committee members to remind everybody about the importance of their participation. It is more important than ever for all MRC members to be dedicated to raising support. Paul suggested sending another letter in a check box format for MRC members to indicate the level of interest and availability to participate in monthly meetings. Additional spaces to name alternates should also be provided. If MRC members can no longer be an active participant they can request to be kept informed as a non-voting member. Polly Fischer would prefer to be removed from the Skagit MRC membership roster.
- PSP ECONet: The Puget Sound Partnership's Education, Communication and Outreach Network (ECONet) committee is seeking active committee members. The Puget Sound Partnership often offers funding through ECONet for education/outreach projects and social marketing. Erica volunteered to represent the Skagit MRC on the ECONet. Erica will provide updates at MRC meetings. Thank you Erica!
- MRC Update to the Commissioners: The MRC subcommittee will update the Board of County Commissioners on December 4, 2012. Tracy will work on the PowerPoint presentation and send it to the subcommittee members for review and revisions. The subcommittee will need to meet prior to December 4 to go over the presentation.

Northwest Straits Foundation Fundraising Strategies and Developing Long Term Goals:

- MRC Capacity Funding: The current capacity funding for the Skagit MRC will expire June 30, 2013. Joan drafted a flow chart for MRC funding. The NWSC Sustainability Plan suggests that each MRC seek \$20,000 in local financial support. The Skagit MRC is very fortunate in that the County will provide around \$20,000 in staff support through the end of 2013. However, the MRC will need to start thinking about long-term sustainable capacity funding. The NWSC is seeking legislative support for each MRC to receive the same level of capacity funding from the state as the coastal MRCs (\$38,500). Capacity funding can be used as a match for other project funding such as the Skagit Restoration Initiative. The next step will be to identify long-term goals and projects that we would like to get funded.
- Long Term Goals/Strategic Planning: Skagit MRC will need to be clear about long-term goals and what the money would be used for. The objectives and monitoring plan will need to be developed before asking for money. The long-term goals and case statement can be incorporated into the 5-year strategic plan that needs to be updated in January. The MRC started working on building a case statement and developing goals earlier in the year but never completed it. Tracy will email what has been completed before the next MRC meeting in November.
- Fundraising: There are several different options for fundraising. One approach would be to raise money through small events such as, a party, a concert, a dinner, a silent auction, etc. Another option would be to approach places like the refineries to sponsor special events and activities such as Fidalgo Bay Day or certain projects. Joan pointed out that angler groups have provided donations to help fund the Derelict Gear program. The MRC decided to form a fundraising subcommittee (Tracy, Kari, Jay, and Lori) to develop a fundraising plan.

- **Outreach:** The public is still largely unaware of who the MRC is. The NWSF developed outreach materials that provide key points about the MRCs and Northwest Straits Initiative and how people can make donations to support the program. MRC members discussed the importance of reaching out to young people and getting them involved in marine stewardship. It was pointed out that it can be difficult to get into the classrooms to educate the kids because of the strict school guidelines. The “Young Beach Stewards” program that the MRC supported a couple years ago proved to be very successful. The program provided 12 hours of marine science/stewardship training for 9th and 10th graders in return for 12 hours of volunteer services. Lori suggested having a poster contest to get more young people involved.

Project Status & Discussion:

- **WSU Beach Watchers:** The Beach Watcher volunteers were out in full force at Fidalgo Bay Day in September. A Trail Tale’s interpretive walk was held at 10:00 a.m. at the Tommy Thompson trail to coincide with Fidalgo Bay Day. The walk focused on 100 years of mill operations at the former Custom Plywood Mill site. Beach Watcher volunteers are also helping with the WDFW Mussel Watch Expansion Pilot project in the Skagit River Delta area. Funding for the Beach Watcher program will expire at the end of October. Nancy will continue working as the Volunteer Coordinator for the Friend’s of Skagit Beach’s Trail Tales program until the end of the year. There has been some discussion about housing a volunteer coordinator position at the Padilla Bay Reserve Center. However, it is still unclear how the position would be funded. There has also been some discussion about the County supporting a volunteer coordinator position, in which case the MRC lead staff would likely take on the role as the volunteer coordinator. The different options for the Beach Watcher program will need to be discussed further.
- **Community Beach Seining Event:** The last event was held in August and funded through the Northwest Straits Foundation’s Burning Foundation grant. Paul is working on the final report.
- **Native Oyster Restoration:** A graduate student is working on the final report.
- **Shannon Point Rip Rap Removal:** The NWSF received a grant from the US Fish and Wildlife Service for the MRC’s Shannon Point Rip Rap removal project. Joan, Paul, and Tracy met with the City of Anacortes to get some clarification regarding the expansion of the Tommy Thompson Trail and potential re-use of the rock. The City is supportive of the restoration work, but they are still uncertain about the layout of the Tommy Thompson Trail expansion. The city will need to work with Western Washington and the Washington State Ferries regarding the trail layout, figure out the details for improving public access to the beach, address the concerns of the residents, and determine where the riprap material will be stored or re-used. The NWSF will hire a contractor to complete a geotechnical survey and enhance the draft feasibility study. Trained volunteers will collect baseline forage fish survey data. The City said they could provide survey information as well some assistance with permits for the riprap removal.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** Fidalgo Bay Day was held September 15, 2012 at the Fidalgo Bay RV Park. This year’s event was funded by the Northwest Straits Foundation’s Burning Foundation grant. We had beautiful weather and a really great turnout of around 302 people! The event was so popular it was a little difficult to find parking. Erica announced that she will not be able to run the event next year.
- **Spartina Surveys:** The Spartina surveys were finished in September. Fifteen volunteer kayakers surveyed approximately 26 miles of Skagit marine shorelines and identified 69 square meters of Spartina. The dredge islands north of the Swinomish Channel are still heavily infested with Spartina. New clones of Spartina were discovered on Skagit Island and in Flounder Bay. The Washington Department of Agriculture and the Skagit Noxious Weed Coordinator were notified about the Spartina locations. The Spartina located on Skagit Island has been eradicated. The final report has been completed. Rachel announced that EarthCorps will take on not be taking over the Spartina program from People for Puget Sound as originally hoped.
- **Forage Fish Survey Training:** Eleven to twelve trained Beach Watchers completed the training and practice surveys at seven sites over two week intervals through September 11, 2012. Forage fish egg samples were collected and are being analyzed. The analysis should be

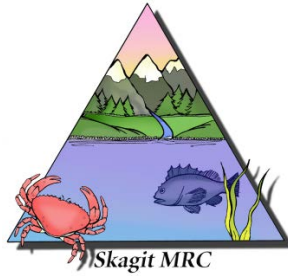
complete by Dan Pentilla in October. There is still some grant funding available to conduct additional surveys and forage fish analysis. Additional survey sights will need to be identified and prioritized. One potential survey site is the Shannon Point Riprap Removal project site. Dan Pentilla can be contracted to do the analysis.

- **Weaverling Spit Beach Restoration:** Phase II of the Weaverling Spit Beach Restoration project is complete. Phase II involved native plantings along the shoreline, beach material enhancement, and softshore beach stabilization. The Coastal Geologic Services staff offered beach survey training to MRC members and Samish Indian Nation staff on Wednesday. Christine provided a tour of the project site at the end of the MRC meeting. A project poster will be provided at the MRC conference.

Miscellaneous Events and Announcements:

- Skagit Climate Science Workshop- October 17, 2012, 9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. at the WSU-Mount Vernon Northwestern WA Research and Extension Center. Please confirm your attendance with the Skagit Watershed Council by October 16. Call (360) 419-9326 or e-mail Shirley at solomon@skagitwatershed.org.
- Restore America's Estuaries (RAE): The annual national conference will be held in Tampa Florida October 20-25, 2012. Rachel offered to give a quick report at the next MRC meeting in November.
- "Some Ideas to Ponder Concerning Livestock Operations and Stream Bacterial Contamination" will be presented by OSU Rangeland Watershed Manager, Dr. John Buckhouse on Wednesday, October 24, 2012 from 7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. at the Padilla Bay Research Reserve. Pre-register by contacting Kristi Carpenter, Skagit Conservation District at (360) 428-4313 or email: Kristi@skagitcd.org by October 22, 2012.
- Annual NWSC/MRC Conference: November 4-5, 2012, at Port Townsend.

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m. The next meeting will be held Thursday, November 8, 2012, at the Mount Vernon Senior Center.



Skagit County Marine Resources Committee

Minutes of the November 8, 2012 meeting held at the Mount Vernon Senior Center

Members Attending: Lori Kyle, Tracy Alker, Erica Pickett, Rachel Benbrook, Jay Lind, Kari Odden, Ivar Dolph, Betsy Stevenson

Members Absent: Kevin Bright, Scott Schuyler, Rebecca Spurling, Charles O'Hara, Christine Woodward, Jim Ramaglia, Kurt Buchanan, Bob Hyde, Paul Dinnel

Others Attending: Nancy Olsen, Friends of Skagit Beaches; Joan Drinkwin, Northwest Straits Foundation; Pete Haase, citizen volunteer; Carla Hill, Port of Anacortes; Austin Rose, citizen

Call to Order and Introductions: Lori Kyle began the meeting at 9:10 a.m.

Minutes: Approved

Public Comments: Pete Haase announced that the 2012 update of the Puget Sound Partnership's (PSP) Action Agenda has been adopted and is now available in a pdf format on the PSP website. Pete has a 20 minute slide presentation highlighting key points of the Action Agenda that he would like to share with the MRC at a future meeting.

Restoration America's Estuaries (RAE) Conference

- Rachel Benbrook attended the RAE Conference in Florida last month. Rachel gave a presentation on the coastal blue carbon sequestration project for the Snohomish estuary. The conference was well attended which shows that there is great momentum for restoration work. Rachel said that it was very interesting to hear the different perspectives for restoration work on the east coast versus the west coast. For example, estuarine restoration work on the east coast involves planting Spartina while our restoration work involves removing it. The conference occurs every two years. The next one will be held in 2014 in Washington.

Puget Sound Partnership's Education, Communication and Outreach Network (ECONet) Committee Update

- Erica reported that the ECONet committee is still trying to figure out the basic functionality of the organization. There are around 46 members, but very few are actively involved. Richelle Potter, the Skagit Conservation Education Alliance (SCEA) Coordinator, has taken the lead as the coordinator for the Skagit ECONet. The PSP provides some funding for coordinating the ECONet. Richelle is only working part-time, so coordinating SCEA and the ECONet can be a little tricky. The next meeting has not been scheduled yet.

Northwest Straits Commission Report:

- The last NWSC meeting was held Friday, November 2 before the MRC conference in Port Townsend.
- Local MRC Funding: It is important for MRCs to better communicate their local funding situation to the NWSC because local funding can be used to leverage other sources of funding. Communications should include reporting on the funding we already have in place, the funding that we will be seeking, and what the funds will be used for.
- NWSC Strategic Plan and Benchmarks: The NWSC discussed updating the strategic plan to clearly integrate our interests with other regional efforts such as the Puget Sound Partnership's Action Agenda. The NWSC is also considering updating the benchmarks or creating new "areas of focus."
- MRC Conference: The annual MRC conference was held November 2-3 in Port Townsend at the Northwest Maritime Center. It was well attended and there was a lot of positive energy. The food was amazing and a lot of it was donated from local businesses like Taylor Shellfish.
 - Silent Auction Donations: The NWSF raised around \$5,600. Thank you cards will be going out to those who donated.
 - The audio tracks, biographies, and presentations from the conference will be available on the Northwest Straits Commission website: <http://www.nwstraits.org/Whats-New/Meetings-Events/2012-MRC-Conference.aspx>.
 - Ocean Acidification in WA: Implications for Community-Based Efforts
 - The Ocean Acidification Blue Ribbon Panel will submit their final report and recommendations to the Governor on November 27 at the Seattle Aquarium. For more information, visit the website: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/water/marine/oceanacidification.html>.
 - The impacts of ocean acidification that we are experiencing now are from CO₂ build-up that occurred 50 years ago. Some shellfish growers have experienced a 20% loss in shellfish production.
 - What can MRCs do at the local level?
 - Education/Outreach: The message can't make the problem sound too big (e.g. global warming) otherwise people will tune it out. We would need to provide solutions or actions that can be done at the local level, stories about how it is impacting real local people, and the science that supports it. Some of the work that the MRCs have already done can be re-packaged to address ocean acidification. The Northwest Straits Commission discussed putting together a proposal for a regional education/outreach component.
 - Action Projects: phytoremediation, carbon sequestration, protecting or restoring seagrass beds, rain gardens, smart sponges, etc.
 - Science: there are no standardized protocols for monitoring pH in seawater at this time. There are other opportunities to research potential impacts including: monitoring nutrients at fresh water inputs and monitoring plankton communities.
 - MRC members suggested contacting Bill Dewey to see if he could give a presentation on how ocean acidification has impacted Taylor Shellfish. The presentation should be widely publicized.
 - Communication Tools and Data Sharing
 - The Northwest Straits Commission will post current communication tools and links on their website. MRCs will be able to share lessons learned from projects.
 - The Northwest Straits Commission will establish an online database of projects to help facilitate more projects sharing among the MRCs. The NWSC currently has an archived list and links of MRC project reports that can be downloaded from their online library: <http://www.nwstraits.org/Archives/Library.aspx>
 - Some of the other data sharing resources that are already in place include:
 - Island County Sound IQ: <http://www.iqmap.org/icSoundIQ/website/index.html>
 - Salish Sea Wiki: http://estuary.cs.wvu.edu/index.php/Main_Page
 - Bulkhead Prevention, Removal, and Alternatives

- Snohomish County MRC recently had a very successful landowner workshop that targeted property owners in the Port Susan Marine Stewardship Area. The workshop's primary focus was on bulkhead prevention. It highlighted potential impacts of bulkheads and offered alternative solutions. Jim Johannessen was able to show great examples of properties that benefited from bulkhead removal. The workshop was well attended and several landowners contacted the County afterwards to find out how they can do the "right thing." Landowners were offered technical analysis of their own property to examine potential impacts and alternative solutions.
 - San Juan County has noticed that more bulkheads are going up faster than they are able to take them down. This could be out of fear of sea level rise.
 - A potential MRC project would be to create a map that identifies property locations that would be the most beneficial for bulkhead removal or prevention. The map could be used as an educational tool for landowners who are seeking permits for installing bulkheads. The maps could also be used for planning future landowner workshops. We could target those properties that would benefit the most from bulkhead prevention, removal, and alternatives.
- Polluted Runoff: Responding to Water Quality Issues
Pollution runoff/water quality is the top priority in the Puget Sound Partnership's Action Agenda. Several research projects are occurring across the region to address these issues including:
- Hood Canal Dissolved Oxygen Program: there is little flushing and high fish kills in this area. The Oceanic Remote Chemical-optical Analyzer (ORCA) is a water quality monitoring buoy developed by the University of Washington. The buoys help measure: DO, Temperature, pH, and weather. You can get real time online data at <http://orca.ocean.washington.edu/index.shtml>.
 - Phytoremediation- Island County MRC: willow and poplar trees were planted in a bioswale to test their ability to remove contaminants from stormwater through their deep root systems. Results showed that the trees greatly reduced fecal coliform and nitrates from pollution runoff. A copy of the presentation is available on the NWSC website:
<http://www.nwstraits.org/uploads/pdf/Meeting%20and%20Events/Conference/2012-Conference/Presentations/Hillers-PollutedRunoff.pdf>
 - Stormwater Pollution Impacts on Salmon Development: WSU Extension Toxicology Lab in Puyallup is currently researching the impacts of stormwater runoff on salmon. The 520 bridge has a downspout that drains right into Lake Washington. Researchers took a sample of the stormwater right after the first flush and tested it on coho salmon which resulted in 100% mortality. Then the stormwater sample was filtered through a simulated rain garden and tested on coho salmon which resulted in 100% survival. The WSU Ext Toxicology Lab offers tours of their facility. Tracy can set up a tour for the Skagit MRC if there is enough interest.

Administrative Report:

- Volunteer Hours: Please continue tracking you volunteer hours on all MRC related tasks (e.g. preparing project reports, grant preparation, training, attending meetings and workshops, oyster restoration, forage fish surveys, etc.).
- MRC Membership: Kurt Buchanan announced his resignation from the Skagit MRC as the representative for the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group (SFEG). It is still unclear whether or not the SFEG would like to replace Kurt with another representative. Kurt was also the MRC project lead for the forage fish surveys. Another MRC member will need to be designated as the project lead for the forage fish surveys. Carla Hill will be replacing Bob Hyde as the Port of Anacortes representative on the Skagit MRC. Bob will be Carla's alternate.
- Meeting Locations: The Seafarer's Memorial Park Building is available for the December 13 Skagit MRC meeting, but it will require a \$300 refundable deposit. Carla offered to find out if we could get the fee waived for our MRC meetings. Christine will verify if the Fidalgo RV Park

would be available for the December 13 MRC meeting. MRC members suggested several alternate locations including the Anacortes Library, the Anacortes Senior Center, and the Washington State University Extension building.

Skagit MRC Work Plan Development:

Joan Drinkwin helped the MRC draft a timeline and provided guidance in developing a work plan:

- December- Develop a list of projects
- January- Draft the work plan and budget

To help get started, the MRC reviewed the Skagit MRC's 5-Year Strategic Plan and crossed through the items that have already been accomplished. There are several things that the MRC will need to consider when identifying projects:

- What is the goal of the project? Does the project fit the goals of the MRC?
- Do the MRC members feel passionate about the project and is there an MRC project lead to help carry it out?
- Will the project help increase the visibility of the MRC in the community?
- Is it a keystone MRC project and does the project fit the MRC's unique niche – or would the project happen without the MRC?
- Does the project fit local priorities?
- Does the project fit regional priorities or the Puget Sound Partnership Action Agenda (e.g. derelict net and crab pot removal, forage fish monitoring, bulkhead prevention and removal, etc.)
- What will the project accomplish? Is it significant? It is important to show that MRCs can make a difference at the local level and that tax dollars are being wisely spent. MRCs can have a big local impact through many small projects that add up to significant improvements. For example, the Whatcom MRC's water quality monitoring projects developed into a new water quality monitoring program adopted by the County government.
- What can we do with different levels of funding (low, medium, and high)?

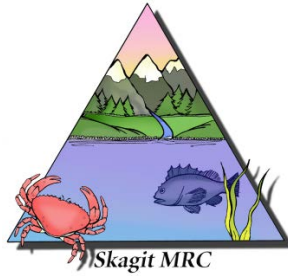
Project Status & Discussion:

- **WSU Beach Watchers:** Planning for the lecture series is underway. Funding for the WSU Beach Watchers Coordinator position expired at the end of October. Several subcommittees have been formed to try to figure out the next steps and to keep the program going. Nancy Olsen is now working as a contractor for the Friends of Skagit Beach's Trail Tales program. Nancy's new consulting firm is called "Your Professional Assistance."
- **Community Beach Seining Event:** Paul is working on the final report.
- **Native Oyster Restoration:** A graduate student is working on the final report.
- **Shannon Point RipRap Removal:** The NWSF will hire a contractor to complete a geotechnical survey and enhance the draft feasibility study. A Scope of Work is currently being developed. Trained volunteers will collect baseline forage fish survey data. The City said they could provide survey information as well some assistance with permits for the riprap removal.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** Erica is working on the final report.

Miscellaneous Events and Announcements:

- Bears to Barnacles Presentation by Dr. Joe Gaydos (SeaDoc Society): This presentation is a free "Trail Tales" event that will be held Friday, November 9 at 6:30 p.m. at the Anacortes Library. Get there early!
- 12,000 Rain Gardens: Washington State University Ext. and other partners are leading a campaign to install 12,000 rain gardens in the Puget Sound region by 2016. If you would like to learn how to install a rain garden or if you would like to register the rain garden that you already have, you can go their website at www.12,000raingardens.org.
- Rachel Benbrook announced that she will be starting a new consulting business that will focus on habitat restoration and GIS mapping.

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m. The next meeting will be held Thursday, December 13, 2012, at the Fidalgo Bay RV Park.



Skagit County Marine Resources Committee

Minutes of the December 13, 2012 meeting held at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort

Members Attending: Christine Woodward, Lori Kyle, Tracy Alker, Erica Pickett, Rachel Benbrook, Jay Lind, Ivar Dolph, Betsy Stevenson, Paul Dinnel, Rebecca Spurling, Charles O'Hara, Jim Ramaglia, Teri Switalski

Members Absent: Kevin Bright, Scott Schuyler, Kari Odden

Others Attending: Ginny Broadhurst, Northwest Straits Commission; Pete Haase, citizen volunteer; Julie Barber, Swinomish Tribe; Kristin Rine, Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group; Kevin Anderson, DNR

Call to Order and Introductions: Lori Kyle began the meeting at 9:10 a.m.

Minutes: Approved

Public Comments: Pete Haase said that the Beach Watchers who have been trained to conduct forage fish surveys are ready to start surveying as soon as the MRC gets another project lead to replace Kurt Buchanan. Kristin Rine, a representative from the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group said that she will be the temporary replacement for Kurt Buchanan on the MRC. Kristin said that she will need to talk to the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group about the possibility of being the new project lead for the forage fish surveys until a permanent replacement is selected.

Puget Sound Partnership's Education, Communication and Outreach Network (ECONet) Committee Update

- Erica reported that the ECONet committee had a meeting on December 13, 2012 in La Conner. Around 20 people attended the meeting. It was a great networking opportunity.

Northwest Straits Commission/Foundation Report:

- The last NWSC meeting was held Friday, November 30 in Coupeville on Whidbey Island. The next meeting will be held January 25 in Bellingham. MRC members are always encouraged to attend.
- Island County Commissioner Helen Price Johnson provided welcoming remarks and expressed her appreciation for the work of the MRCs.
- Rachel volunteered to replace Joe Gaydos on the NWSC Executive Committee.
- According to the survey that was sent out, most people agreed that this year's MRC Conference in Port Townsend was the best conference yet! Lots of positive energy.
- There was a discussion about the differences between what the Puget Sound Partnerships LIOs (Local Integrating Organizations) are doing for getting projects done at the state level versus what we are doing. Each LIO is different. A LIO has yet to be established in Skagit County.

- Terry Klinger gave an update on the ocean acidification blue ribbon panel report (Tracy emailed all Skagit MRC members a copy of the report) *Ocean Acidification: From Knowledge to Action* which can also be found on the NWSC website:
<https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/publications/publications/1201015.pdf>
- The NWSC now has a new Ocean Acidification webpage with links to more information on the topic: <http://www.nwstraits.org/Whats-New/Emerging-Issues/Ocean-Acidification.aspx>.
"Sweetening the Waters": is a really great resource on the NWSC website:
http://www.ecy.wa.gov/water/marine/oa/2012report_app9.pdf
- The Foundation produced a fact sheet on ocean acidification and what the NWSC and MRCs are currently doing to address it. The fact sheet can be found on the NWSC website:
http://www.nwstraits.org/uploads/pdf/Meeting%20and%20Events/OceanAcidification/NWSI-OA_factsheet.pdf.
- The Northwest Straits Foundation Board looked at the updated budget and proposed hiring a temporary office staff person for six months to help with office administration.
- The Foundation sent out a mailing request for donations. There is a match of up to \$15,000 from a private donor.
- The Foundation recently submitted three proposals for the ESRP grant, including the Skagit MRC's Bowman Bay Riprap Removal project proposal.

Administrative Report:

- Volunteer Hours: MRC grant progress reports are due January 15, 2012. Please send your volunteer hours on all MRC related tasks (e.g. preparing project reports, grant preparation, training, attending meetings and workshops, oyster restoration, forage fish surveys, etc.) to Tracy by January 10, 2013. Tracy e-mailed volunteer hour report forms to help track hours.
- MRC Membership: The Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group (SFEG) assigned Kristin Rine as the temporary replacement for Kurt Buchanan on the MRC. Teri Switalski will be replacing Carla Hill as the Port of Anacortes representative on the Skagit MRC. Bob Hyde will be Kristin's alternate. Julie Barber will replace Aundrea McBride as Charlie O'Hara's alternate for the Swinomish Tribe. Rebecca Spurling and Kevin Bright said that they can no longer be active MRC members, but would like to continue to be involved as non-voting members. Rebecca is the representative for Tesoro and Kevin is a representative for the marine dependent business interest group.
- MRC Bylaws: After reviewing the MRC Bylaws, it was determined that there is a four-year term limit. However, MRC memberships have automatically been renewed without going through the process of requesting to be reappointed by the County Commissioners. Ginny said that in order to continue a strong relationship with the County Commissioners, it would be helpful if we would require a request from the Board of County Commissioners to renew MRC memberships after they reach their four year term-limit. The MRC should also consider requiring a limited number of voting MRC members in the Bylaws.
- Election of MRC Officers: New MRC officers will be elected in January or February. We are seeking nominations for Chair, Vice-Chair, NWSC Representative, and NWSC Alternate. MRC members can nominate themselves or someone else.
- MRC Website: Tracy sent out a Request for Quotes to four different website companies. Quotes are due December 21, 2012. We hope to have a contract in place by February. Tracy is seeking volunteers to help with the following: review and approve the website design; gather information and photos for the website; develop membership bios.
- MRC Presentation: The presentation has been postponed until February.
- MRC Fact Sheet and Report to the Community: Beach Watcher Ric Boge finished the first draft of the MRC Fact Sheet and Report to the Community. Ric did a really great job. They will be distributed to the MRC after they've been reviewed and finalized.
- Grant Funding Flexibility: MRC grant funding was originally supposed to be strictly for MRC operations. However, Sasha recently announced that there is now some flexibility with the MRC grant and we can use some of the funding towards small projects. There would have to be enough time to get the grant contract amended, a new project contract in place (if necessary) and the project must be complete before June 30, 2013. Two small projects were identified as possibilities:
 - Community Beach Seining Day: No contract would be necessary. We would partner with Shannon Point Marine Center. Funding would go towards the vessel time. One Community Beach Seining Day could be completed by June 30, 2012 and wouldn't

cost more than \$600. Tracy said she would talk to Sasha to see if a grant amendment would be necessary for this project since this project was part of the original grant agreement.

- Carwash Kit Promotion: Lori said she would have to look into project costs and whether or not a contract would be necessary and if we could accomplish this project in a short timeframe.

The MRC also discussed a potential project for removing invasive species and installing interpretive signage at Cooks Cove, a unique beachfront community on Guemes Island. However it was determined that the Holiday-Hideaway Community Beach is private property and our MRC grant cannot be used to fund this project.

Project Status & Discussion:

- **WSU Beach Watchers**: The lecture series at the Anacortes Library is currently underway. Beach Watchers recently had their holiday party. A subcommittee has been formed to look into the different options for finding more sustainable funding for the program. There are 25 newly trained Beach Watchers who are energetic and ready to go work on projects.
- **Community Beach Seining Event**: Paul completed the final report.
- **Native Oyster Restoration**: A graduate student is working on the final report.
- **Shannon Point RipRap Removal**: No Report.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day**: Erica completed the final report.
- **Weaverling Spit Beach Restoration**: Jim Johannessen and someone from the Fish and Wildlife Service plan to do a 'walk through' of the Phase 3 project site on January 8th.

Miscellaneous Events and Announcements:

- Kevin Anderson from the Washington State Department of Natural Resources announced that they still have grant funding available to provide free labor for restoration projects from the Washington Conservation Corps (Puget Sound) crews through the end of June 2013. One group is particularly interested in a beach cleanup project during the week of Martin Luther King Day. If anyone has suggestions for a beach cleanup project please contact Kevin.
- Landowner outreach/shoreline processes/bulkhead prevention and removal: A meeting will be held Friday, January 11, 2013 at the Padilla Bay Reserve Conference Room from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Contact Kathleen Herman Herrmann (Kathleen.Herrmann@co.snohomish.wa.us) if you would like to attend.

Skagit MRC Work Plan Development:

Snohomish MRC recently held a brain storming session referred to as the "fireside chat." It was a great way to pull together project ideas, set criteria for project selection, and develop a strategic work plan. Ginny was so impressed by the energy and the results of the session that she decided to include it as a topic at the last MRC conference. Ginny said that it is important for the MRCs to select projects that they feel passionate about. Each project needs a project lead, someone to champion the project and see it through. Identifying keystone flagship projects is important because they help create an identity for the MRC in the local community and can provide opportunities to keep the MRC in the public eye. The projects should also be linked to local and regional priorities as well as the Puget Sound Partnership's Action Agenda. If it isn't already, we need to make sure our work ends up in the Action Agenda and present it that way to potential funders. It is important to acknowledge the connection with the Action Agenda and show that we have a process in place for prioritizing and selecting projects based on scientific rational.

Two examples of regional priorities that can be linked to the Action Agenda and MRC projects include bulkhead prevention/removal and Ocean acidification:

- Bulkhead Prevention, Removal, and Alternatives
MRC members discussed the need to analyze the drift cell data that we already have in place to identify the areas that would be the most beneficial for bulkhead removal or prevention. This information will also be very helpful in planning future landowner workshops to target those properties that would benefit the most from bulkhead prevention, removal, and alternatives. This information could also be used as an educational tool for landowners who are seeking permits for installing bulkheads. Julie Barber stated that the Swinomish Tribe is currently working in collaboration with Friday Harbor Labs, the University of Washington, Skagit River Systems Cooperative, Tulalip Tribes, and NOAA, on a bulkhead research project. The project

area stretches as far south as Whidbey Island to as far north as Orcas Island. The project involves collecting and analyzing physical and biological data from armored and non-armored beaches within drift cells to study the impact of shoreline armoring. This is a two-year grant funded project, but they hope to secure additional funding to enhance their study. The desired outcome will be a new and more powerful tool for nearshore habitat protection.

Snohomish County MRC recently had a very successful landowner workshop that primarily focused on shoreline armoring prevention, removal, and alternatives. They were shown examples of bulkhead removal and prevention success stories. The response from landowners was very positive. Many were willing to remove armoring and were interested to learn more about alternatives. Landowners were offered technical analysis of their property to examine potential impacts and alternative solutions. There is a lot of potential to fund this effort as a Northwest Straits regional project. The Snohomish MRC is interested in holding a joint meeting with the Commission and other MRCs to share information and shape it into a regional project. A meeting date has been set for Friday, January 11, 2013 at the Padilla Bay Research Reserve Conference Room. Because the Skagit MRC meeting will be held that Thursday, January 10, 2013, Lori suggested contacting Kathleen to see if she would be willing to change the date from Friday to Thursday so that we could combine the two meetings.

- Ocean Acidification

This is a huge topic and it is important to try to acknowledge it in our projects and work plan. There are many potential actions that we can take at the local level to address this problem. Some of the work that the MRCs have already done or are currently working on can be re-packaged to show how we are already mitigating ocean acidification:

- Phytoremediation;
- Carbon sequestration;
- Protecting or restoring eelgrass and kelp beds;
- Low Impact Development;
- Smart sponges;
- Native oyster restoration;
- Pacific oyster enhancement;

MRC members drafted the following wish list of project ideas:

- Beach Naturalist/Etiquette Training
- Community Beach Seining Day (June and August)
- Car Wash Kit promotion
- Replace the tide gate at No Name Slough to restore tidal exchange. Could include a phytoremediation or mycoremediation aspect
- Marine shoreline protection assessment
- Targeted forage fish monitoring to fill in data gaps in hard to reach places using trained volunteer kayakers
- Carbon sequestration potential of different restoration scenarios of large salt marsh areas (e.g. Freestad Lake)
- Fidalgo Bay trestle overhaul
- Creosote piling and marine debris removal (e.g. Ship Harbor and Guemes Channel - near Trident)
- Install a vegetated bioswale along O' Avenue
- Stormwater diversion and/or phytoremediation at Bayview
- Phytoremediation along the drainage ditch at March's Point

The next step will be to prioritize each project, identify project leads and potential partners, develop cost estimates and budget, and potential funding sources. In addition to developing a list of proposed projects, Ginny suggested identifying our accomplishments. What are we most proud of? What projects do we want to continue? Where would we like to make changes?

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, January 10 2012, at the Mount Vernon Senior Center.