

Skagit County Marine Resources Committee

Minutes of the January 9, 2014 meeting held at the Skagit County Administration building in Mount Vernon.

Members Attending: Kari Odden, Tracy Alker, Jay Lind, Julie Barber, Paul Dinnel, Betsy Stevenson,

Members Absent: Jim Ramaglia, Christine Woodward, Teri Switalski, Morty Cohen

Others Attending: Nancy Olsen, Salish Sea Stewards Coordinator; Michael See, SCPW

Call to Order and Introductions: Kari Odden began the meeting at 9:08 a.m.

Minutes: Approved after minor grammatical revisions

Public Comments: Paul commended the Port of Anacortes for their mitigation work at Wyman's Marina

Northwest Straits Commission Report (NWSC): Provided by Jay Lind

- MRC/NWSC Conference: According to survey results, the MRC Conference was a huge success. The MRC Ignite presentations were well received and seen as a great way to learn about all the MRCs. The Northwest Straits Foundation raised \$7,000 at the silent auction.
- Puget Sound Partnership Bulkhead Prevention: The Puget Sound Partnership is developing an incentive program for preventing bulkheads and preserving natural shorelines.
- New Puget Sound Partnership Director: Governor Jay Inslee recently appointed Sheida Sahandy as the Director of the Puget Sound Partnership. Sheida worked for the City of Bellevue where she served as Assistant to the City Manager. Her appointment will be effective February 4th.
- Marine Debris Removal Project: The Washington Conservation Corps recently received funding from the legislature to support the hiring of military veterans for beach cleanup work. The NWSC is partnering with the Washington Conservation Corps to help identify shorelines in need of the marine debris removal work. The Commission hired Paul Argites to work with the MRCs to identify potential cleanup sites.
- NWSC Retreat: The NWSC retreat will be held March 20th and 21st at the Padilla Bay Reserve. An ad-hoc committee will help plan the retreat. The NWSC 5-Year Strategic Plan will be updated.
- Kelp Monitoring Protocols: Emily Bishop, the 2014 Hollings Scholar from the University of Rhode Island, will be partnering with the NWSC and MRCs to develop survey protocols for monitoring kelp.

Administrative Report: Provided by Tracy Alker

- MRC Grant Reports are Due January 10th! Tracy requested project updates and volunteer hours from MRC members as soon as possible.
- MRC contracts: All contracts for the MRC grant have finally been signed!

- Skagit MRC Website: Thanks to Sasha, we finally launched the new Skagit MRC website! The new website address is: www.skagitmrc.org. There are still a few quirks that need to be worked out. Not all of the reports have been posted yet, but they eventually will be. Let Tracy know if you would like to help with posting information to the website.
- Oil Spill Preparedness Workshop: The date for the oil spill response and preparedness workshop sponsored by the Northwest Straits Foundation and Skagit MRC, has been changed to Saturday, March 15th at Padilla Bay from 9am to 3pm. Skagit MRC members are encouraged to attend. Please RSVP: lim@nwstraits.org.
- MRC Membership: Erica Pickett recently announced her resignation from the MRC. Erica brought a wealth of knowledge and accomplished a lot of great work for the MRC over the past nine years. She is an amazing person and will be greatly missed. The Committee would like to give Erica a special recognition at the next MRC meeting in February. There was a discussion about coming up with a better way to give special recognition and show appreciation for all of our past MRC members, such as putting an article in the paper or a tribute on our website. The Committee discussed the need to seek new membership. MRC members will try to reach out to a few people in the community who might be good candidates. The committee discussed the possibility of widely advertising the request for new MRC members. But first, the MRC will need to decide what the maximum number of MRC members should be, and what interest groups we would like to have represented. Jay noted that several MRCs are currently recruiting new MRC members. He said that it would be really helpful to have an acronym cheat sheet included as part of the orientation package for new members.
- New MRC Project Leads Needed: New MRC project leads will need to be assigned to Fidalgo Bay Day & W. March's Point Beach Enhancement to replace Erica. However, the Committee agreed that it would be best if Erica continue to be liaison to the property owners at W. March's Point since she has built such a great rapport with them. The new MRC Project Lead for W. March's Point Beach Enhancement will be expected to coordinate with Erica and the Northwest Straits Foundation and give the MRC updates at the monthly meetings.
- Skagit Restoration Initiative (SRI): The SRI subcommittee will need to make a decision on what to monitor based on the Fidalgo Bay Monitoring report, develop monitoring protocol, adopt a long-term monitoring plan, and make recommendations to the rest of the MRC. In addition, a new SRI Chair will need to be appointed to replace Erica. An SRI subcommittee meeting will likely be held following the regular MRC meeting next month.
- Guest Speakers: The Committee discussed different ideas for guest speakers and topics for future MRC meetings including: the City's plans for managing stormwater and preventing pollutants from entering Fidalgo Bay, communicating ocean acidification, the Skagit River System Cooperative's bulkhead study, and the results of the Shannon Point riprap removal final feasibility study. Paul also suggested inviting Shannon Point Marine Center's new Director and the Mayor of Anacortes to one of our MRC meetings so they will have a better understanding about we do.

MRC Officer Elections: Kari noted that there were enough MRC members present for a quorum. The consensus of the Committee was to re-elect Kari MRC Chair for a second term, re-elect Jay Lind MRC Vice-Chair and the NWSC Alternate for a second term, and re-elect Christine Woodward the NWSC representative for a second term. In addition, the consensus of the Committee was to elect Julie Barber as the Swinomish Tribe's representative and Aundrea McBride as Julie's alternate. Julie used to be Charlie O'Hara's alternate.

Forage Fish Surveys:

- Custom Plywood Forage Fish Surveys: James Selleck, with Hart Crowser, is conducting forage fish surveys for Ecology at the Custom Plywood site. He used to work for the NWSC doing sand lance research. James surveys the site once monthly in January and February, and then possibly every two weeks starting in March. MRC members are welcome to join in the surveys. Sampling usually takes only 30 minutes, but the samples can't be processed on site right now because the water is shut off for the winter. He is also interested in coordinating with other Fidalgo Bay surveys. James plans to join Kurt Stick (WDFW) for a herring survey in Fidalgo in January or February.
- Forage Fish Survey Training: Phill Dionne (Phillip.Dionne@dfw.wa.gov) from WDFW will train and certify groups of people to conduct forage fish surveys. He will be coming up here from

Olympia, so it would be a good idea to get a large enough group together to make it worth his trip.

- **Surf Smelt Surveys, Bowman Bay:** Pete Haase will be out surveying Bowman Bay for Surf Smelt on Thursday, Jan 23 at noon at the boat launch. MRC members are invited to join. A carpool will be meeting at the Country Corner at Sharpes Corner at about 11:45 am. Let Pete know if you want to carpool.

5-Year Strategic Plan Update: Kari volunteered to update the Skagit MRC's 5-Year Strategic Plan. She will send it to Betsy for review before presenting it to the rest of the Committee for approval.

Project Status & Discussion:

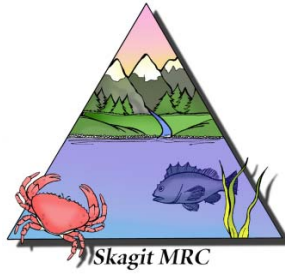
- **WSU Beach Watchers:** The development of a new regional online training program has been delayed. Catherine Buchalski has decided to move forward with a WSU Skagit Beach Watchers training this year. Training will be 100 hours, similar to what has been done in the past. The training will be tagged on with the Island County Beach Watchers, and sessions will be held each Wednesday for seven weeks in the spring and fall, beginning April 2 - May 14, and September 3 - October 15. Each session will be approximately six hours with one Saturday field trip per season. The course fee will be \$100 to cover the costs for materials and facilities. Catherine would like someone from the MRC to give a 30-60 minute presentation about the history of the MRC's and current projects in Skagit.
- **Salish Sea Stewards/Beach Naturalist:** Training will begin March 10th. The application deadline is February 28th. The training information has been posted on the Skagit MRC website. The Beach Naturalist training is being coordinated and combined with the Deception Pass State Park Beach Naturalist training. The training schedule is getting closer to being finalized. The Volunteer Opportunities Open House, hosted by the Skagit MRC, will be held February 5th at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort from 4:00pm – 7:00pm. It will be a one stop shop for citizens to learn about different opportunities for getting involved in the community. There will be at least ten participating organizations as well as volunteers on hand to answer questions. It will be a great way to promote the Salish Sea Stewards/Beach Naturalist programs.
- **Shannon Point Riprap Removal Feasibility Study:** Jim Johannessen with Coastal Geologic Services is currently working on the feasibility study.
- **Bowman Bay Riprap Removal Feasibility Study:** Coastal Geologic Services was the contractor selected to complete the feasibility study. The final feasibility report is due March 31, 2014. The permit to collect forage fish spawning data, and other baseline data has been received. Pete Haase and some of the other trained volunteers will continue conducting observational surveys for forage fish.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** A new project lead will need to be appointed. No date has been set for the 2014 event.
- **Native Oyster Restoration:** Monitoring will continue in the spring and summer during low tide.
- **Community Beach Seining:** The decision was made to have only one community beach seine sampling this year in June instead of having a second seining day in August. June will give a much better snapshot of different fish species than August. In addition, there won't be enough time to get the August report done to meet the grant deliverable deadline. There also might not be enough funding to complete two days of beach seine sampling.
- **NW March's Point Beach Enhancement:** A new project lead will need to be appointed. The project proposal was signed by the owners and submitted this week. Emily Derenne, a Habitat Specialist for Skagit County Public Works, helped the Skagit MRC and Foundation with the permitting process. The permit application has been submitted.
- **Marine Shoreline Protection Assessment:** The Skagit Land Trust will use existing information to identify and map high priority areas for protection. Kari will begin working on this project next week.

Miscellaneous Events and Announcements:

- **FOSB 2014 Lecture Series:** Friday, Jan 10th, at 7 pm, at Northwest Educational Service District in Anacortes: "Ocean Plankton: Life and times of Tiny Marine Organisms" presented by Dr. Jude Apple.

- Volunteer Opportunities Open House: Wednesday, February 5th from 4-7 pm at the Fidalgo Bay Resort. This event is sponsored by the Skagit MRC. MRC members are encouraged to attend.
- Trail Tales: Gary Robinson, Director of the City of Anacortes Parks and Recreation Department, will give a presentation on the new Guemes Channel trail extension on January 14th at 1:00 pm at the Anacortes Library. MRC members are invited to attend. New Trail Tales volunteer orientation will be held February 27th.
- Skagit Land Trust Work Parties: Invasive Removal at the Anacortes Mehler Easement, Saturday, January 25, 2014 from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM.
- WSU Country Living Expo: Jan 25th at Stanwood High School. Over 170 classes to choose from.
- Fidalgo Shoreline Academy: Save the date! April 5th at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort.

The meeting adjourned at 10:55 a.m. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, February 13, 2014, at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort.



Skagit County Marine Resources Committee

Minutes of the February 13, 2014 meeting held at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort in Anacortes

Members Attending: Kari Odden, Tracy Alker, Jay Lind, Julie Barber, Morty Cohen, Betsy Stevenson, Christine Woodward

Members Absent: Jim Ramaglia, Teri Switalski, Paul Dinnel

Others Attending: Erica Pickett; Erin Licata, Samish DNR; Ric Boge; Bud LeMieux; Lisa Kaufman, NWSF; Liz Lovelett, City of Anacortes

Call to Order and Introductions: Kari Odden began the meeting at 9:08 a.m.

Minutes: Approved as written pending the removal of Morty Cohen's name from January's meeting attendance

Public Comments: None

Northwest Straits Commission Report (NWSC): *Provided by Jay Lind*

- Terry Williams provided an update on tribal treaty rights. According to the Treaty Rights at Risk white paper, there are conflicting regulations, too many undersized culverts, and insufficient stream buffers that are negatively impacting salmon recovery. The tribes involved in the white paper have requested regulatory changes to help improve salmon recovery efforts.
- The NWSC went on a tour of the new Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) Shellfish Unit offices. WDFW provided an update on how China's recent ban of west coast bivalves impacted the shellfish industry in Puget Sound. This ban was initiated after high levels of arsenic were found in commercial geoduck from Tacoma. WDFW is reviewing gold mining regulations and how they are impacting salmon spawning beds. They are also collaborating with the Puget Sound Restoration Fund and NOAA to try to restore the pinto abalone population.
- The NWSC will work on updating the Strategic Plan at the retreat in March. The current EPA grant requires an updated 5-Year Strategic Plan as a deliverable due in June.

Administrative Report: *Provided by Tracy Alker*

- Oil Spill Preparedness Workshop: The workshop sponsored by the Northwest Straits Foundation and Skagit MRC will be held **Saturday, March 15th** at Padilla Bay from 9am to 3pm. Skagit MRC members are encouraged to attend and to help spread the word. Please RSVP to the Northwest Straits Foundation: lim@nwstraits.org.
- Forage Fish Survey Training: Caroline is coordinating with WDFW and other partners to conduct several forage fish survey trainings for MRC members and project partners. Each training session will be limited to 12-15 participants. Those who take the training will receive certification and are expected to use what they've learned to carry out a project.

- Kelp monitoring: Caroline is working with an intern on kelp recovery efforts. They will develop a shoreline boat-based survey protocol that is practical for citizen scientists. The data collected will be used to create maps that will be shared on the Washington Vegetative Atlas and SoundIQ.
- Ocean Acidification forums: The NWSC will host four ocean acidification forums in the late spring and summer.
- Marine Debris Cleanup: Paul Argites has been hired by the NWSC to lead the Marine Debris Cleanup program in the Northwest Straits region. Paul will work with each MRC to identify potential cleanup sites. He can be reached at 360-428-1043 or Argites@nwstraits.org.
- Two-Year Project Lists (Work Plan): The NWSC will be sending out a new Request for Proposals to the MRCs for the 2014-2015 grant period. Skagit MRC will need to develop a list of priority projects along with a two year work plan.
- Volunteer Opportunities Open House: The Open House, sponsored by the Skagit MRC, was held Wednesday, February 5th at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort. It was a one stop shop for citizens to learn about different opportunities for getting involved in the community. Although the turnout was a little disappointing, it was a great way to promote the Salish Sea Stewards/Beach Naturalist programs and network with the other organizations.
- Skagit MRC Membership Orientation Packet: An orientation packet will be developed for new MRC members and current members who are interested.

MRC Applicants: There are three applicants who are interested in joining the Skagit MRC: Ric Boge, concerned citizen; Liz Lovelett, City of Anacortes; and Richard “Bud” LeMieux, marine dependent business. They each introduced themselves and provided some background information. The Committee will make a decision regarding the appointment of each applicant prior to the next MRC meeting. The voting will be conducted online. If a consensus is reached, the Committee will make recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners.

5-Year Strategic Plan Update: Kari updated the Skagit MRC’s 5-Year Strategic Plan to be more consistent with the Northwest Strait Commission’s Strategic Plan. It was suggested that verbiage be used to tie it in with the Puget Sound Partnership’s Action Agenda. Kari will email the 5-Year Strategic Plan to Committee members for input. Please use “track changes” when editing the document. Once this plan is complete, it will be used to help develop and rank a list of priority projects and develop a two year work plan for the next round of grant funding (September 16, 2014 – September 15, 2015).

Certificate of Appreciation: Kari awarded Erica Pickett with a Certificate of Appreciation for her nine years of valuable service to the Skagit MRC. As a former marine dependent business owner, an Anacortes City Council member, and an active WSU Beach Watcher, Erica brought a wealth of knowledge, energy, and dedication to the MRC. She was always one of the first to volunteer to help with projects, participate on planning committees, host the MRC display at special events, and give presentations on behalf of the MRC. She served as the project lead for Fidalgo Bay Day, the NW March’s Point beach enhancement, and NE groin removal projects. She also served as the alternate NWSC Representative and the Chair for the Skagit Restoration Initiative. Some of the other MRC projects Erica was involved in include: the March’s Point outfall survey, native oyster monitoring, community beach seining, creosote surveys and removal, the forage fish shade project, and the NE March’s Point beach survey, just to name a few. We were really lucky to have someone like Erica serve on the MRC. She will be greatly missed.

Project Status & Discussion:

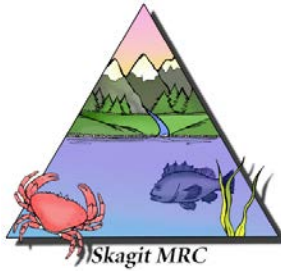
- **Salish Sea Stewards/Beach Naturalist:** Training will begin March 10th. The application deadline is February 28th. The training schedule has been drafted and posted on the Skagit MRC website. Training will be approximately 40 hours with classes held in the evenings and Saturday field trips. The Beach Naturalist training is being coordinated and combined with the Deception Pass State Park Beach Naturalist training. Promotional materials have been developed and widely distributed. Announcements have been placed in local newspapers and partner organization newsletters. Morty noted that WSU has decided to move forward with their regular 100 hour Beach Watcher training program. WSU originally hired Catherine to help develop a regional Master Naturalist online training program. However, the development of that program has been put on hold.

- **Shannon Point Riprap Removal Feasibility Study:** Coastal Geologic Services completed the feasibility study and 60% project design. The Northwest Straits Foundation received funding from the Washington State Department of Natural Resources for construction. Construction will need to take place this summer or fall during the fish timing window. The Foundation is working to get all of the required permits in place. The rock will be removed by barge and the City will store it for future use. The Foundation is developing a pre and post construction monitoring plan.
- **Bowman Bay Riprap Removal Feasibility Study:** Coastal Geologic Services (CGS) was the contractor selected to complete the feasibility study (due March 31, 2014). CGS began a preliminary investigation at Bowman Bay with some test pit digging on January 21. State Parks provided the equipment and operators for test pit digging which helped save money. The test pits will help determine soil composition, locate the edges of the former hatchery infrastructure, help determine the need for an archaeological survey, and determine the depth of the native soil layer. Pete Haase and some of the other trained volunteers have been conducting forage fish surveys. So far no forage fish eggs have been found.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** A new project lead is needed to replace Erica. Ric Boge volunteered to be the project lead if he is appointed to the MRC. Erica will provide the FBD event planning binder to help plan and organize the event. FBD will likely take place at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort mid-September 2014, depending on the availability of the facility. Ric volunteered to reserve the facility following the meeting.
- **Native Oyster Restoration:** Monitoring will continue in the spring and summer during low tide.
- **Community Beach Seining:** Community beach seining will occur at Ship Harbor in June. A contract with Western Washington University will be required for the Shannon Point Marine Center's boat and captain.
- **NW March's Point Beach Enhancement:** A new project lead will need to be appointed to replace Erica. All of the permit applications have been submitted, so now we are waiting on the permits. The SEPA Determination of Non Significance has been received and the Foundation is expecting to get the Hydraulic Permit Approval soon. The Foundation is waiting for clarification as to whether or not a critical areas report is needed before we can get a shoreline permit. So far we are still on track for late summer/early fall construction.
- **Marine Shoreline Protection Assessment:** Kari has started gathering existing GIS data to identify and map high priority areas for protection.

Miscellaneous Events and Announcements:

- FOSB 2014 Lecture Series: "Padilla Bay: A National Jewel in Our Own Backyard: A Finger on the Pulse of the Salish Sea" February 21, 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm at the Northwest Education Services District Building in Anacortes.
- Trail Tales: Interpretive walk with Audubon birders, March 12, 8:30 am – 10:00 am at the Fidalgo Bay Resort.
- Mount Vernon High School Science Night: Betsy volunteered to host the MRC display for the Mount Vernon High School Science Night on April 24. If other MRC members are interested in helping, please contact Betsy.

The meeting adjourned at 11:05 a.m. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, March 13, 2014, at the Skagit County Administration Building.



Skagit County Marine Resources Committee

Minutes of the March 13, 2014 meeting held at the Skagit County Administration Building

Members Attending: Kari Odden, Tracy Alker, Jay Lind, Morty Cohen, Betsy Stevenson, Ric Boge, Liz Lovelett, Paul Dinnel

Members Absent: Teri Switalski, Julie Barber, Christine Woodward

Others Attending: Kristian Tollefson, DNR; Chris Robinson, DNR; Leah Kintner, PSP; Richard Brocksmith, SWC; Catherine Buchalski, WSU Beach Watchers; Nancy Olsen, SSS Coordinator;

Call to Order and Introductions: Kari Odden began the meeting at 9:05 a.m.

Minutes: Approved as written

Public Comments: None

Northwest Straits Commission Report (NWSC): *Provided by Jay Lind*

The NWSC will work on updating the Strategic Plan at the retreat in March. The current EPA grant requires an updated 5-Year Strategic Plan as a deliverable due in June. The Committee discussed the following questions posed by the NWSC strategic planning advisory committee to consider in identifying priorities for 2014-2019.

- *What work do you want to see the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative (NWSI) take on and accomplish in the next 3 to 5 years?*
- *What role does your MRC want to play in that work?*
- *What role do you want to play in that work?*
 - The Committee would like to see the NWSI build more awareness and increase visibility to help garner and maintain support from the community, decision makers, and funders. The Skagit MRC would be willing to help with this through education and outreach, special events, outreach materials, news articles, and presentations to the County Commissioners, the City Council, and other organizations.
 - The Committee would like to see the NWSI support larger regional projects involving multiple counties that will have more of an impact and recognition. Potential regional projects could include: pinto abalone restoration, native oyster restoration, and derelict gear removal. DNR has some funding for pinto abalone restoration and would be interested in partnering with the NWSI and the MRCs in this effort.

Administrative Report: *Provided by Tracy Alker*

- Progress reports are due March 30th: Tracy requested project updates and volunteer hours for the MRC Grant progress reports that are due March 30th. Tracy will send MRC members the report form to help track hours.

- Oil Spill Preparedness Workshop: The workshop sponsored by the Northwest Straits Foundation and Skagit MRC will be held **Saturday, March 15th** at Padilla Bay from 9am to 3pm. There was a nice article in the Skagit Valley Herald about the event. To date, 26 people have registered. Skagit MRC members are encouraged to attend and to help spread the word. Please RSVP to the Northwest Straits Foundation: lim@nwstraits.org.
- Forage Fish Survey Training: Caroline is coordinating with WDFW and other partners to conduct several forage fish survey trainings for MRC members and project partners, including one that will be held in Anacortes this summer. The training schedule is posted on the NWSI website. Each training session will be limited to 12-15 participants. MRC members will have top priority. Those who take the training will receive certification and are expected to use what they've learned to carry out a project.
- Ocean Frontiers: The Friends of Skagit Beaches (FOSB) is interested in partnering with the MRC to host another showing of the Ocean Frontiers film in Mount Vernon. It will most likely be held at the Skagit Valley College to try to attract college students. Jude Apple has volunteered to provide the film introduction, but there will not be a panel discussion afterwards. The Committee agreed that this will be another great way to increase the visibility of the MRC in the community. It will also be an opportunity to advertise any of our upcoming events such as Fidalgo Bay Day (FBD). Tracy will move forward with planning this event on behalf of the MRC.
- Ocean Acidification Webinar (March 19th, 12pm): This webinar is about the different tools that are available to help communicate and educate the public about changes to the ocean's chemistry. Tracy offered to set up the webinar at the County if there is enough interest. Please contact Tracy if you are interested.
- Project Priorities/ two-year work plan: Tracy asked the Committee to start thinking about project priorities for the Sept 2014-2015 grant period. The budget will be approximately the same amount as the current grant (\$70,000). Please keep in mind that the funds can be used for one or two large projects, several smaller projects, or as a match to support MRC projects funded from other sources through the Foundation.

Welcome New MRC Members! The Committee unanimously agreed to make the recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to appoint Ric Boge and Liz Lovelett to the MRC and update the roster. Unfortunately, the MRC could not reach a consensus regarding the appointment of Bud LeMieux's. The Committee decided it should be tabled for further discussion.

5-Year Strategic Plan Update: Kari revised the Skagit MRC's 5-Year Strategic Plan with input from Committee members. The Committee discussed including eelgrass restoration, monitoring and protection in the Plan. DNR is interested in partnering with the MRC in eelgrass monitoring and protection. They are currently monitoring eelgrass in the south sound, but would like to extend it up to the north sound. The MRC also discussed the possibility of expanding the native oyster restoration to new locations such as Secret Harbor at Cypress Island. Kari will follow up with the suggested revisions. The Plan will be adopted at the next MRC meeting. The MRC's 5-Year Strategic Plan will be used to help develop and rank a list of priority projects and develop a two year work plan for the next round of grant funding (September 16, 2014 – September 15, 2015).

WSU Beach Watcher/Skagit MRC Beach Cleanup Proposal: WSU Beach Watcher Coordinator, Catherine Buchalski, is interested in partnering with the Skagit MRC, and other interested partners, for a series of coordinated shoreline clean-ups this summer. Each participating organization will be responsible for selecting their site and date, and mobilizing their volunteer base. Catherine hopes to kick off the beach clean-ups in May to help promote Skagit's Puget Sound Starts Here Awareness Month efforts. In addition, the Beach Watchers will be conducting crabber outreach this summer. Catherine is interested in producing a map that includes hazardous areas that should be avoided for placing crab pots, similar to the map produced by Snohomish County. Please contact Catherine if you have any data that might be useful. DNR might be able to provide some data.

Skagit Watershed Council: The Skagit Watershed Council (SWC) is designated the Lead Entity for Skagit County under Chapter 77.85 RCW Salmon Recovery. The Council is a community-based partnership of organizations working together in the salmon recovery effort. There are currently 25 board members and seven members elected to the Board of Directors. Membership is open to associations, corporations, non-governmental organizations and public agencies who share the same mission and goals. The SWC is currently working on a 3-

year work plan and will be releasing a Request for Proposals for habitat restoration projects that will benefit salmon. SWC receives some soft money and state and federal grant funding. Richard Brocksmith is the new Director of SWC. Richard is looking for opportunities to partner with the MRC and other organizations where the work overlaps. The Council could help provide technical assistance, letters of support, community engagement, a connection with elected officials, and funding.

Project Status & Discussion:

- **Salish Sea Stewards/Beach Naturalists:** Training is approximately 40 hours with classes held in the evenings (5:30pm to 8:00pm) and Saturday field trips. The evening classes are open to the public and registration isn't necessary. See the Skagit MRC website for the complete training schedule (www.skagitmrc.org). Training began March 10th. 20 people attended the first training session, and 13 have registered to become Salish Sea Stewards volunteers. Nancy offered to present an evaluation of the program, lessons learned, and recommendations for a future volunteer training program at the May MRC meeting. Morty reminded the Committee that WSU has indicated they will not be continuing the Beach Watcher program next year. They have decided to develop a regional Master Naturalist online training program instead. There will likely be a marine environment component. Although WSU plans to hire three people to develop and manage the new training program, they will not be coordinating volunteers. The Padilla Bay Foundation has indicated that they are interested in hiring a full time volunteer coordinator if they can get some financial support from partner organizations.
- **Shannon Point Riprap Removal Feasibility Study:** Coastal Geologic Services completed the feasibility study and 60% project design. The Northwest Straits Foundation received funding from the Washington State Department of Natural Resources for construction. Construction will need to take place this summer or fall during the fish timing window. The Foundation is working to get all of the required permits in place. The rock will be removed by barge and the City has plans to store it for future use. The Foundation is developing a pre and post construction monitoring plan.
- **Bowman Bay Riprap Removal Feasibility Study:** Coastal Geologic Services (CGS) began a preliminary investigation at Bowman Bay with some test pit digging on January 21. State Parks provided the equipment and operators for test pit digging which helped save money. The test pits will help determine soil composition, locate the edges of the former hatchery infrastructure, help determine the need for an archaeological survey, and determine the depth of the native soil layer. Midden was discovered at the site. The Foundation and State Parks will work closely with the tribes to determine the next steps. The feasibility study will most likely not be completed by the March 31 deadline as originally anticipated. Pete Haase and some of the other trained volunteers have been conducting forage fish surveys. So far no forage fish eggs have been found.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** Ric Boge has replaced Erica Pickett as the new project lead for Fidalgo Bay Day (FBD). Ric reserved the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort facility for September 13, 2014. Dan Penttila and the Shannon Point Marine Center (SPMC) are on board to participate at FBD this year. SPMC will be bringing their popular touch tanks and beach seine.
- **Native Oyster Restoration:** Oyster cultch bags will be distributed in the spring and monitoring will continue in June and July during low tide.
- **Community Beach Seining:** Community beach seining will occur at Ship Harbor in June. A contract with Western Washington University will be required for the Shannon Point Marine Center's boat and captain.
- **NW March's Point Beach Enhancement:** A new project lead will need to be appointed to replace Erica. All of the permit applications have been submitted, so now we are waiting on the permits. The SEPA Determination of Non Significance has been received and the Foundation is expecting to get the Hydraulic Permit Approval soon. The Foundation is waiting for clarification as to whether or not a critical areas report is needed before we can get a shoreline permit. So far we are still on track for late summer/early fall construction.
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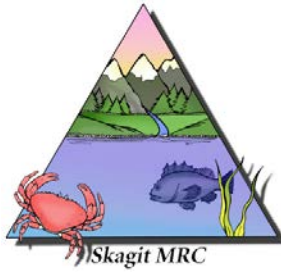
Miscellaneous Events and Announcements:

- FOSB 2014 Lecture Series: March 14, 7:00pm - 8:30pm at the Northwest Educational Service District Building in Anacortes, *"Salish Sea Oceanography and Marine Ecosystem Stressors: Partners in a*

Changing Marine Landscape" presented by M. Brady Olson, Ph.D., Marine Scientist, Western Washington University, Shannon Point Marine Center.

- FOSB Fidalgo Bay Shoreline Academy: April 5th (8:30 to 3:30 pm) at the Fidalgo Bay Resort: Keynote speaker: Deep Ocean Vents by Dr. Deborah Kelley. Choose from 3 sessions including interpretive walks.
- Sea Star Wasting Disease Monitoring: Alex at the Padilla Bay Research Reserve is developing and coordinating a citizen science monitoring program for sea star wasting disease.
- Mount Vernon High School Science Night: Betsy will be hosting the MRC display for the Mount Vernon High School Science Night on April 24. If other MRC members are interested in helping, or if you have any ideas for an interactive display, please contact Betsy.

The meeting adjourned at 11:10 a.m. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, April 10, 2014, at the Fidalgo RV Resort in Anacortes.



Skagit County Marine Resources Committee

Minutes of the April 10, 2014 meeting held at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort in Anacortes

Members Attending: Kari Odden, Tracy Alker, Jay Lind, Morty Cohen, Betsy Stevenson, Ric Boge, Liz Lovelett, Paul Dinnel, Julie Barber, Christine Woodward

Members Absent: Teri Switalski

Others Attending: Catherine Buchalski, WSU Beach Watchers; Nancy Olsen, SSS Coordinator; Don McMoran, WSU Skagit Ext.; Austin Rose, Whatcom MRC; Pete Haase, Citizen; Sharon Riggs, Padilla Bay NERR; Suzanne Shull, Padilla Bay NERR, Leah Hines (Port of Anacortes, Teri's Alternate)

Call to Order and Introductions: Kari Odden began the meeting at 9:05 a.m.

Minutes: Approved as written

Public Comments: WSU Beach Watcher Eric Shen reported that WSU has indicated they will not be continuing the Skagit Beach Watcher training program next year. Instead they plan to develop a regional Master Naturalist online training program taught by WSU faculty. Eric and several other Skagit Beach Watchers formed a Strategic Planning Committee to try to find a way to keep the program funded. The Padilla Bay Foundation has some funding available to hire a part time volunteer coordinator to help support their programs. They said they are willing to take on the Beach Watcher program if other partner organizations can provide enough funding to support a full-time volunteer coordinator to help run the program. Eric said they have received letters of support from several other partner organizations. Eric requested that the MRC consider the possibility of partnering with Padilla Bay to combine the Salish Sea Stewards with the Beach Watchers to create a new program and provide some funding to support a volunteer coordinator and volunteer training. The funding request includes: \$15k for general marine based volunteer training, \$3k for program development, and \$10k for volunteer coordination, for a total of \$28,000. Nancy Olsen offered to provide an evaluation of the Salish Sea Stewards program and recommendations for blending it into a program at Padilla Bay.

Don McMoran, Director of Skagit WSU Extension, said we all need to work in cooperation rather than competing for the same resources by having two or three volunteer training programs. Jay noted that due to funding restrictions, MRC funds cannot be used to support WSU Beach Watchers because it is a WSU program, not an MRC program. Don is working to find funding to keep Catherine on as the Skagit Beach Watcher Coordinator. He also expressed interest in the possibility of WSU partnering with Padilla Bay to join efforts in volunteer training and coordination rather than creating a new volunteer program. Don also wanted to make it clear that if a new volunteer program is created at Padilla Bay, it cannot be called Beach Watchers because that name belongs to WSU.

Northwest Straits Commission Report (NWSC): *Provided by Christine and Jay*

The NWSC recently had their two day retreat to update their Strategic Plan. It was a great working session and it was really nice to have consensus. One of the takeaways from the retreat was that education and outreach is

key to long-term success. Having community support makes it easier to raise money for the important work that we do. A subcommittee has been tasked with compiling the information from the retreat. Christine also reported that the Marine Resource Advisory Committee on ocean acidification recently had their second meeting.

Administrative Report: *Provided by Tracy Alker*

- Progress Reports: Tracy thanked the MRC members for reporting their volunteer hours and project updates for the MRC Grant progress reports that were due March 30th. The next progress reports are due July 11.
- Oil Spill Preparedness Workshop: The Oil Spill Preparedness and Response Workshop, sponsored by the Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) and Skagit MRC, was held March 15th at Padilla Bay. More than 30 people participated. We received a lot of really great feedback. There was a nice follow-up article about the event in the Skagit Valley Herald.
- Ocean Frontiers Film Event: To help celebrate Earth Day, Skagit MRC is partnering with the Friends of Skagit Beaches (FOSB) and the Skagit Valley College to sponsor a showing of the inspiring documentary "Ocean Frontiers: The Dawn of a New Era in Stewardship." The event will be held at the Skagit Valley College in Mount Vernon on April 22 at 6:00pm. Tracy encouraged MRC members to attend to help answer questions.
- 2014 - 2015 MRC Grant: The NWSC staff sent out the Request for Proposals for the next round of grant funding for the MRCs for the Sept 2014-2015 grant period. The proposals are due May 31, 2014. The budget will be approximately the same amount as the current grant (\$70,000). Please keep in mind that the funds can be used for one or two large projects, several smaller projects, or as a match to support MRC projects funded from other sources through the Foundation. Please send your project ideas along with a brief description and estimated costs to Tracy as soon as possible. Tracy will compile the list of projects and budget scenarios that will need to be prioritized and approved for MRC grant funding at the next MRC meeting on May 8th. Tracy will also send out project proposal criteria to help with project proposal development, evaluation, and selection.

Skagit Restoration Initiative Update: Morty reported that The Skagit Restoration Initiative Committee (SRI), administered by the Northwest Straits Foundation, identified the top three monitoring parameter priorities for Fidalgo Bay and restoration sites including: sediment monitoring to determine the status and trends of sediment movement; forage fish spawning monitoring; and beach seining to determine the status and trends of nearshore fish use. Other monitoring parameters could be considered in the future. The plan is to recruit and train volunteers to help with the monitoring. The data collected will be analyzed by someone with the expertise. The Foundation will work with the committee to develop monitoring protocols and draft a workplan to be approved by the Skagit MRC.

5-Year Strategic Plan Update: Kari revised the Skagit MRC's 5-Year Strategic Plan with input from Committee members. The Committee approved and adopted the revised 5-Year Strategic Plan.

WSU Beach Watcher/Skagit MRC Beach Cleanup Proposal: WSU Beach Watcher Coordinator, Catherine Buchalski, is partnering with the Skagit MRC, and other interested partners, for a series of coordinated shoreline clean-ups this summer. Catherine plans to kick off the beach clean-ups in May to help promote Skagit's Puget Sound Starts Here Awareness Month efforts. Paul Dinnel provided a few ideas for potential cleanup sites. Catherine will coordinate and supervise the volunteers. She will make sure they will sign in as volunteers with their contact information and date and time they were there. Catherine will also track the amount and type of trash cleaned up. The Island County Beach Watchers will provide some of the equipment needed.

Sound IQ: *Presented by Suzanne Shull*

Sound IQ is a great tool for sharing and accessing nearshore data online (<http://www.iqmap.org/SoundIQ>). The project was initiated by the Island County Marine Resources Committee and has since expanded to include other counties in the Northwest Straits region including Jefferson and Whatcom Counties. Snohomish County is next in line to get their data online. Other partner organizations are providing data sets as well such as oil spill risk assessments. The City of Bellingham was contracted to develop the program. Suzanne is working closely with the MRCs to identify the data sets that they would like to share on Sound IQ. In the future, they

hope to provide the data on mobile apps for smart phones. Data layers can include project maps, reports, photos, text, reports, etc. Sound IQ is comprised of three different modules: Map Module (displays geographic data); Search Research Results Module (records search including: beach access, boat launch, points of interest, shellfish beaches, etc); and Beach Report Module (displays additional details about the location along with photos). Kari suggested contacting Sasha to find out what the timeline would be for getting Skagit MRC data up and running in the Sound IQ and what costs might be involved. The Committee should consider including the Sound IQ project in the 2014 - 2015 MRC workplan.

Beach Cleanup at Cooks Cove, Guemes Island: *Presented by Austin Rose*

Austin recently completed the Citizen Action Training School (CATS) in Bellingham. The CATS program provided 50 hours of training that focused on civic engagement and Puget Sound watershed education in return for 50 hours of volunteer services. Austin elected to remove marine debris and invasive species at Cooks Cove on Guemes Island as her service project. Cooks Cove is a closed marsh lagoon in the Hidden Hideaway community with a lot of trash and invasive species. The Rapid Shoreline Inventory completed by the Skagit MRC identified opening up the lagoon as a potential restoration project. Austin worked with the Washington Conservation Corps and veterans crew to cleanup the lagoon. They removed 41.5lbs of debris, mostly plastic. An article about the cleanup was in the Anacortes American, the HHA newsletter, and in the Guemes Tide paper. Austin also plans to work with the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group to remove invasive plants and education and outreach. Austin will follow-up with a final report once the project is complete. The creosote treated logs at the site were too large and could not be removed without a permit. The Samish Tribe is working with DNR to remove the creosote pilings in the lagoon this summer. Paul noted that there are also creosote treated logs on the shoreline near the ferry that should be removed.

Project Status & Discussion:

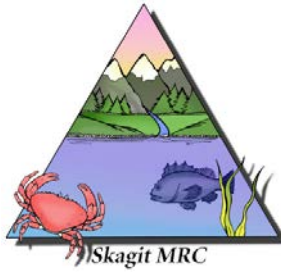
- **Salish Sea Stewards/Beach Naturalists:** Training began March 10th. 20 people attended the first training session, and 13 registered to become Salish Sea Stewards volunteers. Unfortunately, three ended up having to drop out of the program. Training is approximately 40 hours with classes held in the evenings (5:30pm to 8:00pm) and Saturday field trips. The evening classes are open to the public. See the Skagit MRC website for the complete training schedule (www.skagitmrc.org). The newly trained volunteers will graduate on April 29. MRC members are encouraged to attend to show support for the new volunteers.
- **Shannon Point Riprap Removal Feasibility Study:** Coastal Geologic Services (CGS) completed the feasibility study and 60% project design. The Northwest Straits Foundation received funding from the Washington State Department of Natural Resources for construction. Construction will likely take place this fall once all of the permits are in place and the project design is finalized. The rock will be removed by barge and the City has plans to store it for future use. The Foundation is developing a pre and post construction monitoring plan.
- **Bowman Bay Riprap Removal Feasibility Study:** CGS began a preliminary investigation at Bowman Bay with some test pit digging on January 21. State Parks provided the equipment and operators for test pit digging which helped save money. The test pits helped determine soil composition, located the edges of the former hatchery infrastructure, helped determine the need for an archaeological survey, and determined the depth of the native soil layer. Cultural resources were discovered at the site. The Foundation and State Parks are working closely with the tribes to determine the next steps. An archaeologist will be required on site when digging. The feasibility study should be completed by June 30th. Pete Haase and some of the other trained volunteers have been conducting forage fish surveys. So far no forage fish eggs have been found.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** Ric Boge has replaced Erica Pickett as the new project lead for Fidalgo Bay Day (FBD). Ric reserved the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort facility for September 13, 2014. Dan Penttila and the Shannon Point Marine Center (SPMC) are on board to participate at FBD this year. SPMC will be bringing their popular touch tanks and beach seine. The Friends of Skagit Beaches (FOSB) is coordinating the FBD event with National Estuaries Day and FOSB Trail Tales volunteers will be on hand to provide interpretive walks. Ric is currently putting together an outreach committee to help better promote the event. He is looking for volunteers to help with children's activities such as fish prints and other crafts. Save the date posters have been printed and widely distributed. Christine will contact the Samish canoe family to coordinate canoe tours.

- **Native Oyster Restoration:** Oyster cultch bags will be distributed in Fidalgo Bay in the spring and monitoring will continue in June and July at the trestle during low tide.
- **Community Beach Seining:** Community beach seining will occur at Ship Harbor in June.
- **NW March's Point Beach Enhancement:** We are waiting on the permits. The SEPA Determination of Non Significance has been received and the Foundation is expecting to get the Hydraulic Permit Approval soon. A cultural resources assessment and a biological evaluation will be required. So far we are still on track for early fall construction.
- **Marine Shoreline Protection Assessment:** Kari has been gathering existing GIS data to identify and map high priority areas for protection.

Miscellaneous Events and Announcements:

- FOSB 2014 Lecture Series: March 14, 7:00pm - 8:30pm at the Northwest Educational Service District Building in Anacortes, "*In search of Poo, Spew, and Goo: Scientific Detective Work to Assess Threats to Southern Resident Killer Whales*" presented by Brad Hanson, Wildlife Biologist with NOAA.
- Mount Vernon High School Science Night: Betsy will be hosting the MRC display for the Mount Vernon High School Science Night on April 24.
- Tesoro Tour: Nancy Olsen has organized a tour at the Tesoro Refinery for her Trail Tales volunteers and has invited MRC members to attend as well. The tour will be held on May 13 from 10:00am to 1:30pm Participants will be picked up at 34th Street and the Tommy Thompson trail. There will be a 1.5 hour tour and presentation. Lunch will be provided. Please RSVP Nancy by April 16th if you are interested in going.
- Fidalgo Bay Beach Cleanup: Samish Indian Nation is partnering with the City of Anacortes to co-sponsor a beach cleanup event on Earth Day, April 22nd between 10:00am and 3:00pm. Volunteers will meet at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort and cleanup trash at the beach and along Fidalgo Bay Road.
- Fidalgo Bay Trestle Update: Christine reported that the Samish Indian Nation recently met with the WA Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and decided to move forward with completing the engineering plans for the Fidalgo Bay causeway removal/replacement. They met with the City of Anacortes last week to make a formal proposal. The DNR aquatics division is helping with the funding. The City of Anacortes will be the project lead.
- Skagit WSU Ext Ice Cream Social: WSU Extension is celebrating 100 years with an open house and ice cream social on May 1 and 4.
- Tractor Safety Class: WSU Extension is offering a tractor safety course on April 15 from 6:00pm to 8:00pm.

The meeting adjourned at 11:05 a.m. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, May 8, 2014, at the Skagit County Administration Building in Mount Vernon.



Skagit County Marine Resources Committee

Minutes of the May 8, 2014 meeting held at the Skagit County Administration Building in Mount Vernon

Members Attending: Kari Odden, Tracy Alker, Jay Lind, Morty Cohen, Betsy Stevenson, Ric Boge, Liz Lovelett, Paul Dinnel, Julie Barber, Christine Woodward

Members Absent: Teri Switalski

Others Attending: Nancy Olsen, SSS Coordinator; Sharon Riggs, Padilla Bay NERR; Joan Drinkwin, NWSF

Call to Order and Introductions: Kari Odden began the meeting at 9:05 a.m.

Minutes: Approved as written

Public Comments: Nancy Olsen pointed out how the Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference was a great reminder of just how important it is to communicate and collaborate with all of the different organizations who are out there working towards similar goals.

Northwest Straits Commission Report (NWSC): *Provided by Christine*

- New NWSC Program Coordinator: the NWSC hired a new Program Coordinator, Holly Faulstich. Holly will be responsible for meeting and event logistics, social media & website updates, NWSC newsletter, photo management, and information distribution.
- Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference: Ginny, Caroline and Joan gave presentations at the Salish Sea Conference in Seattle. It was a great venue and well attended. The Foundation was awarded the prestigious Salish Sea Science prize in recognition of the derelict fishing gear removal project.
- New Ecology Grant Process: The Department of Ecology has a new online application process for their grants called Ecology Administration of Grants and Loans (EAGL). The application is in an Excel format. The MRC's will have to use this new format and online process for applying for the 2014-2015 NWSC/MRC Grant. The grant application deadline is June 16.
- Ocean Health Forum: May 14th, 6:30pm – 8:00pm at the Everett Station (3201 Smith Avenue). The primary focus is ocean acidification.
- Meeting With Legislators: Ginny had a very successful meeting with legislators in Washington DC recently. They were very supportive of the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative and the work that the MRCs do.

Administrative Report: *Provided by Tracy Alker*

- Ocean Frontiers Film Event: To help celebrate Earth Day, Skagit MRC partnered with the Friends of Skagit Beaches (FOSB) and the Skagit Valley College to sponsor a showing of the inspiring documentary "Ocean Frontiers: The Dawn of a New Era in Stewardship." The event was held at the Skagit Valley College in Mount Vernon on April 22 at 6:00pm. Even though the event was well advertised, the turn-

out of less than 20 people was a little disappointing. Tracy thanked Ric Boge and Kari Odden for hosting the Skagit MRC display and answering questions.

- Upcoming MRC Grant: It is anticipated that the total grant amount will be around \$75k. The grant period is September 16, 2014 to September 15, 2015. The grant application deadline is June 16. Project leads must submit the grant proposals to Tracy before the 16th.
- Wildlife Rehabilitation Equipment Deployment Locations: The WA Department of Fish and Wildlife is trying to identify at least two potential locations within the Anacortes/Mount Vernon area for deploying and operating wildlife rehabilitation equipment in case of an oil spill. They will need the space for at least 30 days following an oil spill. Tracy emailed a list of criteria required for facilities to serve in this capacity. MRC members suggested the County fairgrounds, the Port of Skagit, the Port of Anacortes, and the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort as potential locations.

Skagit Restoration Initiative Update and Workplan: *Provided by Joan Drinkwin*

- Background: In 2009, as part of the Natural Resources Damages Assessment (NRDA) settlement for the former Scott Paper Mill Site, Kimberly-Clark was directed to pay the Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) a total of \$500,000, for restoration projects in Fidalgo Bay and Padilla Bay. Payments were received in annual installments of around \$100,000 over a five year period. The last payment was just received in April. These funds are referred to as the Skagit Restoration Initiative (SRI). The Skagit MRC formed a subcommittee to oversee this funding and make recommendations on how it should be spent. The SRI committee is currently comprised of five MRC members: Tracy, Paul, Christine, Jay, and Morty. Unlike the NWSC/MRC grant funding restrictions, these funds can be used for projects on private property. In addition, there is no deadline for when this money must be spent. In light of the fact that the last NRDA settlement payment has been received, the Foundation and the MRC established a policy to leverage all remaining funds with a one to one match with outside funding or in-kind matching funding.
- Accomplishments: To date, SRI accomplishments include: restoration of sediment transport processes and forage fish spawning habitat restoration at three sites: at NE March's Point on Padilla Bay and at Weaverling Spit and West March's Point in Fidalgo Bay; underwater surveys of marine debris in Fidalgo Bay following a fire that destroyed a portion of the Tommy Thompson Trail; Olympia Oyster restoration in Fidalgo Bay; Tideland habitat acquisition in Padilla Bay; developing a long-term monitoring plan of forage fish spawning habitat restoration in Fidalgo Bay; and completed the project design for beach nourishment at NW March's Point, South of the Tesoro Boat Launch.
- SRI Workplan: Joan presented the annual SRI workplan (July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015). This workplan builds on previous years' work done by the Foundation and the Skagit MRC to restore sediment transport processes, enhance forage fish spawning habitat, and restore Olympia oyster populations in Fidalgo Bay. A significant monitoring component is included in the workplan to help measure the effectiveness of restoration projects at achieving stated goals, to increase the regional scientific understanding of restoration work, and to inform future work. Three projects will be funded under this workplan:
 1. Northwest March's Point beach nourishment (\$51,331.90)
 2. Nearshore monitoring (\$4,000)
 3. Olympia oyster enhancement (\$2,000)The remaining SRI funding will be set aside for future projects (\$122,000). Joan will send the updated budget with correct numbers as soon as possible. The consensus of the Committee was to approve the proposed workplan pending the correct budget information from Joan.

Skagit MRC Project Evaluation and Prioritization:

Skagit MRC reviewed and evaluated eight project proposals and budget scenarios, including MRC operations, to be funded under the NWSC/MRC grant for the period of September 16, 2014 - September 15, 2015. The total grant amount is estimated to be around \$75,000. All of the project proposals can be linked to the NWSI Benchmarks, the Puget Sound Partnership's Action Agenda and the MRC's 5-Year Strategic Plan. The projects that ranked the highest are as follows:

- Skagit MRC Operations (\$16,000). *Project Lead- Tracy Alker*
MRC grant funds will be used to support staff time, MRC Conference/travel, MRC display updates, refreshments for meetings/special events, and website maintenance.
- Fidalgo Bay Day (\$2,500). *Project Lead- Ric Boge*

MRC grant funds will likely be used for advertisement, event banner, posters, permits, hand washing station, grill, food supplies, thank you cards, etc.

- Abalone Restoration Monitoring (\$9,100). *Project Lead- Paul Dinnel*
MRC grant funds will be used to conduct a six month post-outplant survey in September to monitor growth, survivorship and movement of this most recent introduction effort at Burrows and Allan Islands. MRC funds will also be used to seed additional sites at Low Island in the San Juan Channel with hatchery-reared abalone. If an additional \$3,000 becomes available it could be used to fund the Passive Integrated Transponders Tag Field Trial surveys. The long-term tagging would allow for reliable mark-recapture data collection providing valuable insight on growth, survivorship and movement of introduced abalone.
- Salish Sea Stewards (\$20,000). *Project Lead- Morty Cohen*
Skagit MRC will partner with Padilla Bay to continue the Salish Sea Stewards program, including training and coordinating volunteers, with oversight of the MRC. Beach Watchers will be invited to join the Salish Sea Stewards, but the Beach Watcher name will stay with WSU.
- Beach Naturalists (\$5,000). *Project Lead- Liz Lovelett*
Skagit MRC will partner with the City and schools to develop and coordinate the Beach Naturalist (BN) program. It will include training and coordinating volunteers, incorporating classroom visits and scheduled programs at Washington Park. There is a possibility that the City of Anacortes might have some additional funding available to help support the BN program. It might also be possible to package it with the Salish Sea Stewards program at Padilla Bay as a project specific task.
- Bowman Bay Riprap Removal (\$10,000). *Project Lead- Jay Lind*
Construction will likely take place in the summer or fall of 2015, pending funding. Cost estimates for construction is \$175,000. NWSF is currently seeking grant funding which requires a 15% match. This grant will help cover part of the 15% match.
- Shoreline Landowner Workshops and Site Visits (\$11,000). *Project Lead- Betsy Stevenson*
Skagit MRC will partner with the NWSF to develop, promote, and implement landowner workshops and site assessments to prevent bulkheads and promote alternative solutions. The Foundation is seeking additional grant funding to assist MRC's with these workshops.
- Monitoring at Restoration Sites (\$1,400). *Project Lead- Tracy Alker*
Skagit MRC will partner with the NWSF to develop and implement a monitoring program at MRC restoration sites including Shannon Point, Bowman Bay, and NW March's Point. Monitoring will include: forage fish surveys, sedimentation movement, and beach seining. The Foundation is hiring an intern to help MRCs with monitoring and data analysis. Grant funding will go towards training volunteers, equipment/supplies, and data analysis.

Below are the other projects that were considered but ranked a lower priority for NWSC grant funding:

- Sound IQ (\$3,000). *Project Lead- Kari Odden/Betsy Stevenson*
Sound IQ is a data/ information sharing website for the MRCs: www.iqmap.org/SoundIQ/. This project was ranked as a low priority for MRC grant funding because the NWSC has some funding available and Kari offered to donate her time to help with GIS data. It will be included in the 2014-2015 Work Plan.
- Cumulative Impacts of Shore Armoring (\$12,400). *Project Lead- Julie Barber*
Since 2012, Skagit River Systems Cooperative (SRSC) and the University of Washington have been gathering shoreline data related to armoring, to identify geomorphic and biological impacts. This project proposal is to combine the northern, central, and southern datasets and seek regional patterns. It would provide the MRC with information regarding the cumulative impacts of armoring in Skagit County. Although this work is very important, this project was ranked as a low priority for the MRC because it wasn't specific enough to Skagit County and it would be difficult to measure the immediate benefits. Skagit MRC will reconsider this project if additional funding becomes available.
- Forage Fish Survey Analysis (\$10,000). *Project Lead- Julie Barber*
Existing forage fish survey data collected from the study sites across the region will be analyzed as a component of the cumulative impact study of shore armoring. Although this work is very important, this project was ranked as a low priority for the MRC because it wasn't specific enough to Skagit County and it would be difficult to measure the immediate benefits. Skagit MRC will reconsider this project if additional funding becomes available.

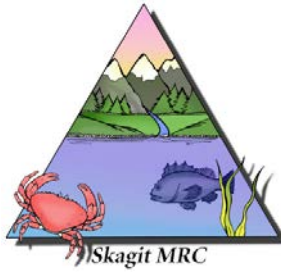
Project Status & Discussion:

- **Salish Sea Stewards/Beach Naturalists:** Congratulations to the newly trained volunteers who graduated on April 29. They are a very enthusiastic and energetic group of volunteers who are eager to start helping with projects.
- **Shannon Point Riprap Removal Feasibility Study:** The cultural resources survey has been completed and forwarded to United States Fish and Wildlife Service who is taking the lead on the federal permitting. The landowner agreement forms from the City and Western Washington University have been received. The Joint Aquatic Resource Permits Application (JARPA) has been submitted to the Corps and Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Lisa will start moving forward with the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) process next week. The next step is to schedule an open house to introduce the project to the public and the neighbors. More details soon.
- **Bowman Bay Riprap Removal Feasibility Study:** Coastal Geologic Services completed the design report and received comments. The preferred alternative is to remove most of the riprap, except the rock that buttresses the pier, and provide a curved pathway to allow for more vegetation to be planted. An 8" buffer of native sediment will be left on top to protect any cultural materials that may be present. Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group (SFEG) will start working on the planting plan.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** Ric Boge is working with the schools to get the correct language in the event fliers for distribution to promote the event. Event planning continues. The event will be held at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort on September 13.
- **Native Oyster Restoration:** Oyster cultch bags will be distributed in Fidalgo Bay in the spring and monitoring will continue in June and July at the trestle and other sites during low tides.
- **Community Beach Seining:** It was recently discovered that a federal collection permit is required for community beach seining at Ship Harbor because juvenile Chinook salmon have been caught there during previous seining events. In accordance to provisions under the Endangered Species Act, if any juvenile Chinook salmon are caught in the net, all seining activities must cease, unless it is covered under a federal collection permit. Unfortunately, it will take too long to get a federal permit, so the community beach seining event at Ship Harbor must be canceled this year. Paul proposed to purchase a smaller beach seine net with the \$800 remaining in the budget for this task. The total cost to purchase the beach seine is around \$1,200, so \$300 will need to be transferred from Admin (Task 1) in the MRC grant. The smaller net will be more consistent with what the other MRCs are using, will catch smaller samples and have less of an impact, will be easier for a small group of volunteers to handle, and won't require a research vessel to haul it. The consensus of the Committee was to approve Paul's proposal to purchase the smaller beach seine with the remaining funds.
- **NW March's Point Beach Enhancement:** It is anticipated that the Biological Assessment report will be finalized this week. Lisa will send it to the County and the Corps for permits. The cultural resources survey was completed by Caldera Archaeology and was forwarded to the tribes and the Department of Historic Preservation.
- **Marine Shoreline Protection Assessment:** Kari is compiling existing GIS data to identify and map high priority areas for protection.

Miscellaneous Events and Announcements:

- **Tesoro Tour:** Nancy Olsen organized a tour at the Tesoro Refinery for Trail Tales volunteers, Salish Sea Stewards, Beach Naturalists and MRC members. The tour will be held on May 13 from 10:00am to 1:30pm.
- **Mussel Watch Pilot Expansion Study Results:** A presentation will be held Thursday, June 19th at Ecology Headquarters in Lacey, 10:00am to 11:30am. RSVP Jennifer Lanksbury, WA Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

The meeting adjourned at 11:25 a.m. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, June 12, 2014, at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort in Anacortes.



Skagit County Marine Resources Committee

Minutes of the June 12, 2014 meeting held at the Skagit County Administration Building in Mount Vernon

Members Attending: Kari Odden, Tracy Alker, Jay Lind, Morty Cohen, Betsy Stevenson, Liz Lovelett, Paul Dinnel, Christine Woodward

Members Absent: Teri Switalski, Julie Barber, Ric Boge

Others Attending: Nancy Olsen, SSS Coordinator; Sharon Riggs, Padilla Bay NERR; Jamie Kilgo, DNR; Catherine Buchalski, WSU Beach Watcher Coordinator; Pete Haase, Citizen

Call to Order and Introductions: Kari Odden began the meeting at 9:00 a.m.

Minutes: Approved as written

Public Comments: None

Northwest Straits Commission Report (NWSC): *Provided by Christine*

- Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas: Stephanie Buffum, Director of Friends of the San Juans, gave a presentation on the Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSA) at the NWSC meeting. PSSA is an area that may be vulnerable to damage by international maritime activities and in need of special protection by the International Maritime Organization (IMO). Criteria taken into consideration for PSSA include the area's cultural, historic, and ecologically important resources. PSSAs could be used as a tool to limit fossil fuel export through the Salish Sea. Stephanie and Christine were asked to give a presentation on the feasibility study proposal for the Salish Sea at the Musqueam First Nation's, Marine Safety and tanker summit in Vancouver BC. Representatives from the tribes, federal government, and industry participated in the summit. Christine said that either she or Stephanie could give the presentation on the PSSA at the MRC meeting in August.
- NWSC Strategic Plan: The draft NWSC 3-year Strategic Plan is almost complete and ready for review. The Plan clarifies MRC roles, articulates goals and objectives, and defines a clear path for prioritizing projects for a collective impact. The draft Plan will be sent to MRC members along with a survey for review and input. The survey will ask for the MRCs comfort level with the environmental goals of the strategic plan and then will ask the MRC to identify actions and outcomes that they would like to offer to be part of the plan. Survey responses are due mid-August.
- Election of NWSC Officers: Christine Woodward was re-elected as Chair and Nan McKay elected as Vice-Chair.
- NWSC/MRC Conference: The annual conference will be held December 5 and 6 in Point Townsend. Please participate in the survey to provide input on session topics.

Administrative Report: *Provided by Tracy Alker*

- MRC Grant Proposals: The 2014-2015 MRC grant application deadline is June 16. Tracy thanked the project leads for submitting proposals. The consensus of the Committee was to approve the following revisions to the budget:
 - Skagit MRC Operations (\$12,100): Budget was reduced from \$16,000 to \$12,100 in order to help support some of the other projects.
 - Fidalgo Bay Day (\$2,500): No changes to the budget.
 - Abalone Seeding & Monitoring (\$10,000): Budget was increased from \$9,100 to \$10,000.
 - Salish Sea Stewards (\$20,000): No changes to the budget.
 - Beach Naturalists (\$5,000): No changes to the budget.
 - Bowman Bay Riprap Removal (\$10,000): No changes to the budget.
 - Shoreline Landowner Workshops and Site Visits (\$11,000): No changes to the budget.
 - Nearshore Restoration Monitoring (\$1,400): No changes to the budget.
 - Sound IQ (\$3,000): The budget was increased from \$0 to \$3,000. The Committee did not previously budget for this project. However, NWSC staff encouraged all of the MRCs to get their data online by 2015. They also recommended that the MRCs budget for GIS assistance, unless there is an MRC member who has GIS experience and is willing to donate time to work on this project. Unfortunately, the Skagit MRC does not have anybody who can commit to this task at this time so we will need to seek some assistance.
- Revised Skagit Restoration Initiative (SRI) Workplan: The budget in the SRI 2014-2015 Workplan was revised and forwarded to the Skagit MRC members for review. The consensus of the Committee was to approve the revised SRI Workplan.
- Upcoming Grant Opportunities: Several grant opportunities were forwarded to the MRC for review and consideration:
 - Rose Foundation: Grant funds may be used for land acquisition, and nearshore habitat and water quality restoration projects located in Whatcom, Skagit or San Juan Counties. The Committee discussed potential projects for this grant including: acquisition of intertidal property or a match for the Weaverling Spit nearshore restoration project. More information is needed before moving forward with these proposals.
 - Puget Sound Marine and Nearshore Grant Program (Landowner incentives to reduce Puget Sound shoreline armoring): The Northwest Straits Foundation will work with all of the MRCs who are interested to apply for this grant as a regional collaborative effort to reduce shoreline armoring. The Foundation is aware that the Skagit MRC is interested in collaborating.
- Mussel Watch Pilot Expansion Study Results: Tracy reminded the Committee that a presentation will be held Thursday, June 19th at Ecology Headquarters in Lacey, 10:00am to 11:30am. If you can't make it down to Lacey, you can watch the presentation via WebEx.
- Shannon Point Nearshore Restoration Project Open House: MRC members are encouraged to attend the Open House to show support for the project on Tuesday, June 17, 6:30pm – 8pm at the Anacortes Library. The purpose of the Open House is to acquaint community members with the project and plans to restore forage fish spawning habitat and improve feeder bluff function along 770 linear feet of shoreline at Shannon Point.
- Hosting the MRC Display: Volunteers are needed to help with hosting the MRC display at the following events. Christine volunteered to help with the MRC display at Fidalgo Bay Day. Please contact Tracy if you would like to help.
 - Skagit River Salmon Festival: Saturday, September 6, from 11am - 6pm along the waterfront at the Swinomish Casino.
 - Fidalgo Bay Day: Saturday, September 13, from 10am – 3pm at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort.
- Education Communication and Outreach Network (ECONet): Tracy asked if there was any interest from MRC members to actively participate on the Puget Sound Partnership's ECONet. Committee members decided that it didn't seem to be very beneficial or worthwhile for the MRC to actively participate at this time.
- MRC Membership Recruitment/Procedures Discussion: The Committee agreed that it was important to have a discussion about MRC membership and recruitment procedures at the July or August MRC meeting. It was decided to hold an executive session following the regular meeting to have this discussion.

Salish Sea Stewards Program: Presented by Morty Cohen

- **Program Evaluation:** 14 people signed up for the Salish Sea Stewards training in March 2014, but 3 had to drop out due to scheduling conflicts with work. Out of the 11 people who graduated from the program, 5 were WSU Beach Watchers. They seem to be a very enthusiastic and motivated group of volunteers who are eager to start helping with projects. The volunteers who signed up for the program were mostly retired people, despite efforts to reach out to a wider demographic. Even though this training was only 40 hours and the classes were mostly held in the evenings, the time commitment seemed to be an issue for those working or in college. All evening classes were open to the public which helped expose more people to the program. The goal of the SSS program was to increase public awareness of the marine environment and the MRC, foster stewardship, and build a strong volunteer base of citizen scientists to help support Skagit MRC and partner projects. At the end of the training, SSS volunteers were asked to complete an evaluation of the program. Results showed that few knew about the MRC before the classes, all want the program to continue and all were aware of the Beach Watcher classes but chose to take the Salish Sea Stewards training. There were mixed feelings about whether or not day or evening classes would be best. Nancy pointed out that there were some challenges with coordinating the Salish Sea Stewards program, because unlike Beach Watchers, it hasn't really developed an identity yet. Building an identity for the Salish Sea Stewards program will take some time and commitment to develop.
- **Program Proposal:** The Padilla Bay Foundation plans to hire a Volunteer Coordinator to train and coordinate volunteers to help with Padilla Bay NERR's projects. The Coordinator will also be tasked with helping to support the projects and programs of partner organizations that are providing funding to support the Coordinator position including: Friends of Skagit Beaches, the Skagit County Public Works Clean Water Program, and the Skagit MRC. Skagit MRC will contract with the Padilla Bay Foundation to continue the Salish Sea Stewards program with the help of their new volunteer coordinator. The MRC will work closely with the Foundation in developing the program to make sure our goals and objectives are being met. Whether or not the classes will be in the evening or the day, or will be 40 hours or longer is yet to be determined. Because the Beach Watcher program will not continue after next year, the Beach Watcher volunteers will be invited to join the Salish Sea Stewards, but the Beach Watcher name will stay with WSU.

Catherine pointed out that WSU Ext. is considering supporting Shore Stewards workshops next year since they will not be providing Beach Watcher training. Tracy noted that Skagit MRC is also proposing to have at least one shoreline landowner workshop next year that will focus on shoreline processes, the impacts of bulkheads, alternate solutions, and property analysis. Although the Shore Stewards program has a broader focus than the MRC's program, it might be possible to combine the two programs into one workshop or they could be coordinated as a workshop series. We could also consider targeting different locations for each workshop.

Beach Naturalist Program: Presented by Nancy Olsen and Liz Lovelett

- **Program Evaluation:** The Beach Naturalist training program was a collaboration of Skagit MRC, Deception Pass State Park and Anacortes City Parks. Training consisted of 5 classes and 2 field trips. Some of the classes were combined with the Salish Sea Stewards training. 8 completed the Beach Naturalists training including 2 Salish Sea Stewards. 5 of the Beach Naturalists are also volunteers at Deception Pass State Park. The Beach Naturalist program has very different objectives than the Salish Sea Stewards program, so it should be its own program and not combined with the Salish Sea Stewards. The trained Beach Naturalist volunteers are scheduled to be at Sunset Beach at Washington Park in Anacortes for low tides in June, July and August. The schedule will be posted on the Skagit MRC website.
- **Program Proposal:** Skagit MRC will partner with the City and schools to expand and coordinate the Beach Naturalist (BN) program. It will include training and coordinating volunteers, incorporating classroom visits, and scheduled programs at Washington Park. There is a possibility that the City of Anacortes might have some additional funding available to help support the BN program.

Project Status & Discussion:

- **Salish Sea Stewards:** Salish Sea Stewards (SSS) Coordinator, Nancy Olsen regularly provides the newly trained volunteers with additional training and volunteer opportunities. Volunteers have signed up to help with Skagit MRC's forage fish monitoring and Fidalgo Bay Day. They've also signed up to help with

several partner organization projects including: Sea star wasting disease monitoring, marine biotoxin monitoring, harbor porpoise studies, great blue heron monitoring, and many others. A joint meeting/picnic for the SSS and Beach Watcher volunteers will be held June 30th at the Kiket Island Kututali Preserve.

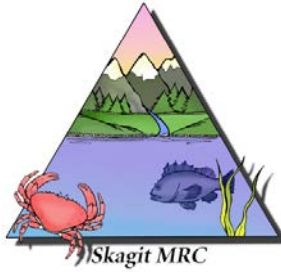
- **Beach Naturalists:** A Public Service Announcement was recently released to let people know that the small team of trained Beach Naturalists will be available to provide informal interpretation of the beach life at Washington Park Sunset Beach (near the boat launch) during several low tide dates in June, July, and August. The schedule will also be posted on the Skagit MRC website. Besides helping visitors identify what they are finding under the rocks, Naturalists will help make sense of how beach life survives in the intertidal zone and how people can help it to thrive.
- **Shannon Point Riprap Removal Feasibility Study:** As part of the outreach effort to introduce the project to the public and the neighbors, an Open House will be held Tuesday, Tuesday, June 17, 6:30pm – 8pm at the Anacortes Library. MRC members are encouraged to attend and show support of the project.
- **Bowman Bay Riprap Removal Feasibility Study:** Coastal Geologic Services completed the design report and received comments. The preferred alternative is to remove most of the riprap, except the rock that buttresses the pier, and provide a curved pathway to allow for more vegetation to be planted. An 8" buffer of native sediment will be left on top to protect any cultural materials that may be present. Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group (SFEG) will start working on the planting plan.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** Ric Boge, the Project Lead for Fidalgo Bay Day, was recently diagnosed with a serious health issue. This will require him to take a leave of absence from the MRC and prevent him from continuing as Project Lead. Paul will try to get in touch with Ric to find out what still needs to be done. Jay, Kari, and Tracy offered to help with some of the tasks. The event will be held at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort on September 13.
- **Native Oyster Restoration:** Paul went out with several Beach Watcher volunteers and WWU students earlier this spring to collect oyster settlement data from quadrant samples and oyster cultch bags at 20 sites in Fidalgo Bay. Preliminary results indicate excellent oyster settlement in 2013 that is about ten times greater than in most years. Very few oysters were found in transects located south of the trestle compared to north of the trestle. This could be due to the very muddy bottom. Volunteers and students will continue to help with routine monitoring at the Fidalgo Bay trestle site on June 13 and 14. At the end of the month they will monitor possible oyster settlement along the south shore of Guemes Island. In July they plan to monitor seed planted in Padilla Bay in 2013. This fall they will plant new oyster seed at Sea Farers Park in Anacortes to hopefully provide a larval source for western and northern Fidalgo Bay.
- **Community Beach Seining:** The Community Beach Seining has been canceled due to permit requirements. The project funds will be used to purchase a smaller beach seine that will be easier for volunteers to use at Fidalgo Bay Day and monitoring at nearshore restoration sites. A tote will also be purchased to store and transport the net.
- **NW March's Point Beach Enhancement:** The Foundation is still waiting on the permit from the Corps, but hope to get it soon. Below is the estimated timeline:
 - Corps permit received: Tuesday, **June 17**
 - Drawings updated/Sent to County: Monday, **June 23**
 - Fill and Grade permit received: Tuesday, **July 8**
 - Bid Announcement Posted: Wednesday, **July 16**
 - Pre-Bid Meeting: Wednesday, **July 23**
 - Bid Opening: Tuesday, **August 5**
 - Contract signed/Notice to Proceed issued to contractor: Tuesday, **August 12**
 - Forage Fish Survey completed prior to construction start...Work must be completed within 7 days of forage fish survey if no eggs detected.
- **Marine Shoreline Protection Assessment:** Kari is currently assessing the GIS data that has been compiled to identify and map high priority areas for protection. Preliminary results have identified a few properties that are of great interest to the Skagit Land Trust for protection.

Miscellaneous Events and Announcements:

- The Anacortes City Council is currently considering a resolution drafted by council members Liz Lovelett and Ryan Walters, for increased safety standards for rail transport of oil. They plan to meet with the refineries and Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad to discuss safety concerns.

- WSU Beach Watchers plan to start conducting intertidal monitoring at Washington Park, the Samish Island Public Beach, and potentially Bowman Bay, using the standard protocol developed by the Beach Watchers. All of the data collected will be sent to Island County for analysis and incorporated into the Puget Sound Assessment and Monitoring Program (PSAMP). The Puget Sound Assessment and Monitoring Program (PSAMP) brings together local, state, and federal agencies—coordinated by the Puget Sound Partnership—to assess trends in environmental quality in the Sound.

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, July 10, 2014, at the Skagit County Administration Building, Mount Vernon.



Skagit County Marine Resources Committee

Minutes of the July 10, 2014 meeting held at the Skagit County Administration Building in Mount Vernon

Members Attending: Tracy Alker, Jay Lind, Betsy Stevenson, Paul Dinnel

Members Absent: Teri Switalski, Julie Barber, Morty Cohen, Liz Lovelett, Christine Woodward, Kari Odden

Others Attending: Nancy Olsen, Salish Sea Stewards/Beach Naturalists Coordinator; Birdie Davenport, DNR; Richard Brocksmith, Skagit Watershed Council; Lisa Kaufman, Northwest Straits Foundation

Call to Order and Introductions: Jay Lind began the meeting at 9:05 a.m. Jay noted that there were not enough MRC members present to have a quorum.

Minutes: Approved as written

Public Comments: None

Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) and Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) Report: *Provided by Jay*

- NWSC/MRC Conference: Planning for the 2014 NWSC/MRC conference is underway. It will be held in Port Townsend December 5-6, 2014. They are looking for input from MRCs.
- NWSC Strategic Plan: The strategic planning advisory committee has requested input from MRCs through an online survey. The surveys should be completed by one representative from each MRC. Comments from MRCs are due August 15. The Commission hopes to adopt the Plan at the NWSC meeting in September. Tracy noted that so far only one Skagit MRC member provided any feedback regarding the NWSC Strategic Plan. Without a quorum, a decision could not be made for completing the online survey on behalf of the Skagit MRC until after the next MRC meeting in August.
- Forage Fish Survey Training: The NWSC recently completed four forage fish survey training workshops for volunteers. The next workshop will likely be held in Skagit County in late August or early September.
- Sea Star Wasting Disease: Dr. Drew Harvell provided an update on the sea star wasting disease. Mortality has been high in Oregon and Washington and some local extinction in California.
- NWSF Fundraising: The Foundation Board formed a subcommittee of five people, including Skagit MRC member Jay Lind, to develop a fundraising plan. Jill Clark, the Foundation's Director of Outreach and Development, is leading this effort. The purpose is to secure more sustainable funding for the Foundation's regional projects as well as to help support the County MRCs. Jay plans to start contacting various local businesses and organizations for donations. It was noted that many businesses have specific timelines for allocating funds for donations. The Foundation's fundraising committee is open to suggestions. Please let Jay know if you have any ideas.

Administrative Report: *Provided by Tracy Alker*

- Progress Reports Due Friday, July 11: Please send Tracy project updates and volunteer hours as soon as possible if you haven't already.
- 2014-2015 MRC Grant Proposals: Skagit MRC grant proposals were revised per comments received from NWSC staff following initial review. The proposals have been re-submitted for further review by the NWSC staff and technical committee.
- MRC Grant Amendment: The current MRC grant must be amended to adjust the County Match, project deliverables and deadlines, remove the Community Beach Seining task and move those funds to Fidalgo Bay Day to purchase the permit and net. Please let Tracy know if she needs to make any additional adjustments as soon as possible.
- Oil Spill Preparedness Workshops: The Northwest Straits Foundation is in the process of developing the next series of oil spill preparedness workshops. Per workshop evaluation results, they are now considering making the workshops shorter and possibly shifting the target audience to local officials. They are open to suggestions.
- NOAA Marine Sanctuary Nominations: National Oceanic and atmospheric administration (NOAA) has opened a call for nominations for new National Marine Sanctuaries. Betty Carteret, President of the Friends of Skagit Beaches, is looking into the feasibility of nominating Skagit Bay (including Similk) as part of a coordinated effort with other like-minded organizations, including the Skagit MRC. In order to qualify to become a marine sanctuary, it must meet specific criteria and other considerations. For example, it must have ecological, historical, or cultural significance; have community support expressed by a broad range of interests; support present and potential economic uses; and partnership opportunities. More information can be found at the NOAA National Marine Sanctuary website at: <http://www.nominate.noaa.gov/guide.html#document>. Skagit MRC members agreed that more information is needed before any decisions can be made regarding the feasibility of the nomination.

Shoreline Landowner Workshops/Incentives Grant

The Northwest Straits Foundation is applying for the Puget Sound Marine Nearshore Grant Program grant opportunity: Landowner Incentives to Reduce Puget Sound Shoreline Armoring. The Foundation's proposal is to support landowner workshops with companion site visits and permitting assistance to landowners. The grant application deadline is **July 31, 2014**. Betsy recently participated in a conference call with the Foundation and other MRC reps. The following information is needed from each participating MRCs to help develop a stronger proposal:

- How many workshops and site visits are desired?
The Committee discussed the possibility of providing two different workshops to meet the needs and priorities of the different types of shorelines. One workshop could target high bank areas and the other could target low bank areas. However, there was some concern that splitting it up this way might not address the impacts to neighboring properties. Similar landowner workshops were held in Hood Canal that addressed the impacts along a continuous shoreline and how one property could impact another, and were very successful. Lisa Kaufman will work with the Skagit MRC and other organizations that have provided or are providing similar workshops in order to develop the best possible program for Skagit County.
- What budget is needed to support the workshops, if any?
Skagit MRC has already budgeted \$11,000 in the current MRC grant proposal to support at least one landowner workshop and several companion site visit in 2015. If the Foundation is awarded this grant, it will be used to supplement and enhance Skagit MRC's proposal to provide additional workshops and site visits.
- What are the priority areas for workshops and permit assistance?
A little more research of existing reports and property records will likely be required to identify the priority areas for Skagit County. Please contact Betsy if you have any ideas.
- Letters of support are also needed from MRCs. The Foundation will provide a template.
Betsy volunteered to help draft the letter for Skagit MRC.

Project Status & Discussion:

- **Salish Sea Stewards:** A joint meeting/picnic for the Salish Sea Stewards/Beach Naturalists and Beach Watcher volunteers was held June 30th at the Kiket Island Kututali Preserve. There was an excellent turnout of 20 volunteers. Morty provided the volunteers with an update on Skagit MRC's proposal to

continue the Salish Sea Stewards program for another year. The Salish Sea Stewards also joined the Beach Watchers for a wonderful field trip to the Whale Museum at Friday Harbor. They even spotted a whale!

- **Beach Naturalists:** There are currently eight very enthusiastic Beach Naturalists who are actively involved in the program. A 45-minute informal family-friendly interpretive Beach Naturalists program will be held at Washington Park's Sunset Beach on Sunday, July 13 at 1:00pm. The volunteers will give a short presentation on intertidal marine life and proper beach etiquette and host a display table with a shell collection, intertidal identification cards and books. In addition, Beach Naturalists will be available to provide informal interpretation of the beach life at Washington Park during several low tide dates in July, and August. The schedule has been posted on the Skagit MRC website. The volunteers are using an online program/smartphone app called volunteer spot (www.volunteerspot.com) for scheduling and reporting volunteer hours. Nancy created a Beach Naturalists banner to display while the Naturalists are at the beach. The Beach Naturalists are also very interested in designing and installing interpretive signage at Washington Park to help continue building awareness of the marine environment and educating the public on proper beach etiquette. One of the volunteers has a background in graphic design and marketing and can come up with a great design free of charge. Nancy will draft the message for the signage which will get reviewed and preapproved by the City of Anacortes. They are looking for partners to help fund it. In the meantime, the Beach Naturalist will produce a temporary interpretive sign approved by the City. One of the Beach Naturalist volunteers is also planning to set up an Instagram/Twitter site for people to post photos of their visit to Sunset Beach at Washington Park.
- **Shannon Point Riprap Removal Feasibility Study:** As part of the outreach effort to introduce the project to the public and the neighbors, an Open House was held Tuesday, June 17, 6:30pm – 8pm at the Anacortes Library. Although Jim Johannessen's report indicated that it would be highly unlikely that the project would impact the neighboring properties, a few residents were still very concerned. As a follow up to the public meeting, Jim Johannessen and Lisa Kaufman plan to meet with members of the Sunset Cove Homeowners Association to discuss their concerns about the project. Permitting is still underway. However, before the City will move forward and issue a State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) determination, they are considering hiring a third party engineering firm to assess the project.
- **Monitoring Plan:** The Northwest Straits Foundation hired Jason Morgan as an intern for one year to assist with the Derelict Gear program as well as developing the monitoring plan for Skagit MRC project sites. Jason Morgan is looking further into what has been done by the Fidalgo Reserve group so we can start to narrow down locations for monitoring. The Foundation also plans to move forward with hiring Jonathan Waggoner to conduct the beach profile training, but need to work on the budget first. Monitoring parameters will be site dependent but could include:
 - Forage fish spawning
 - Beach profiles (change in elevation)
 - Large woody debris accumulation (possibly including an assessment of percent shade)
 - Wrack line assessment and/or surface epifaunal assessment
 - Sediment size analysis (the analysis end of this might be challenging, but we may also be able to do photos at set points)
 - Bluff erosion rates
 - Beach seining for nearshore fish use
 - Vegetation monitoring
- **Bowman Bay Riprap Removal Feasibility Study:** Coastal Geologic Services completed the feasibility report and 60% design. A few minor edit are being made to the report to add various funders. The preferred alternative is to remove most of the riprap, except the rock that buttresses the pier, and provide a curved pathway to allow for more vegetation to be planted. An 8" buffer of native sediment will be left on top to protect any cultural materials that may be present. The next step is to start the permitting process. The goal is to have all the permit applications submitted by the end of August.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** WSU Beach Watcher Beckie Arnold has volunteered to take the lead in coordinating the Fidalgo Bay Day event. Beckie will work closely with Tracy to make sure we stay on track with tasks, grant deliverables, and invoices. The event will be held at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort on September 13.
- **Native Oyster Restoration:** Paul and his son recently conducted a pre-survey at Guemes Island for potential new native oyster restoration sites. There was no evidence of native oysters. They

concluded that the habitat was not really ideal for native oysters. It consisted of rocky cobble and too many predators. Oyster cultch bags were deployed in Fidalgo Bay and Padilla Bay and will be surveyed for new oyster settlement. The Native Oyster Restoration project is currently being funded in part with Skagit Restoration Initiative funds. Paul hopes to produce an annual project report by the end of the year.

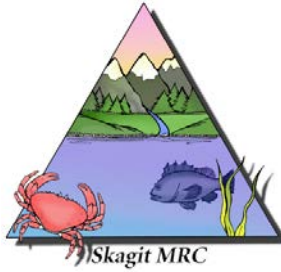
- **Community Beach Seining:** The Community Beach Seining has been canceled due to permit requirements. The project funds were used to purchase a smaller beach seine that will be easier for volunteers to use at Fidalgo Bay Day and monitoring at nearshore restoration sites. A tote will also be purchased to store and transport the net. The net is currently being stored at the County office.
- **NW March's Point Beach Enhancement:** The Foundation is still waiting on the Fill & Grade permit from the County before they can proceed with the bid process. The revised timeline is as follows pending the permit:
 - Post Bids: July 15
 - Pre-bid meeting: July 24
 - Bid Opening: August 6
 - NTP: Sometime around August 18th

Pete Haase and his crew of volunteers have done at least one forage fish survey at the project site in the last month. They saw a few eggs when they looked at the samples with the microscopes, but did not see any visual evidence of spawning at the site. Dan Penttila will also be conducting a pre-construction spawning survey for us per Hydraulic Project Approval (HPA) requirements.

- **Marine Shoreline Protection Assessment:** No report.

Miscellaneous Events and Announcements: No Announcements.

The meeting adjourned at 11:25 a.m. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, August 14, 2014, at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort, Anacortes.



Skagit County Marine Resources Committee

Minutes of the August 14, 2014 meeting held at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort in Anacortes

Members Attending: Tracy Alker, Jay Lind, Betsy Stevenson, Paul Dinnel, Teri Switalski, Julie Barber, Morty Cohen, Liz Lovelett, Christine Woodward, Kari Odden

Members Absent: None

Others Attending: Nancy Olsen, Salish Sea Stewards/Beach Naturalists Coordinator; Birdie Davenport, DNR; Lisa Kaufman, Northwest Straits Foundation; Pete Haase, citizen/volunteer; Holly Faulstich, NWSC

Call to Order and Introductions: Kari Odden began the meeting at 9:05 a.m.

Minutes: Approved as written

Public Comments: Kurt Buchanan is organizing one or two planting events as a living memorial for former MRC member, Ric Boge, who has been dealing with serious health issues. Ric and his wife know about this, and love the idea. Kurt invited the MRC to participate. The planting for Ric will likely be combined with other restoration planting activities with the Skagit Land Trust and the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group. Kurt is currently working with the Skagit Land Trust to identify potential restoration planting sites to do a planting event this fall. The plants will likely be donated bare root plants. Kurt will provide information through Tracy as it develops. Donations to the Friends of the Forest- Anacortes, in the name of Ric, are also being accepted. Betsy Stevenson volunteered to look into the different options that the MRC could contribute as a group.

Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Report: *Provided by Christine*

- **NWSC/MRC Conference:** Planning for the 2014 NWSC/MRC conference is underway. It will be held in Port Townsend December 5-6, 2014. Christine handed out "Save the Date" postcards. Registration will begin in October. The agenda is currently being developed by an advisory committee. Conference details will be posted online at www.nwstraits.org
- **NWSC Strategic Plan:** The strategic planning advisory committee has requested input from MRCs through an online survey. The surveys should be completed by one representative from each MRC. Comments from MRCs are due August 15. Please send your comments to Tracy ASAP.
- **External Relations Committee and Implementation Tracking Committee:** The Commission is seeking participants for two new committees: External Relations Committee and Implementation Tracking Committee. Each committee requires at least two MRC representatives and will be chaired by a Commission member. Please contact Ginny Broadhurst if you are interested in participating or need more information.
- **Kelp Survey Protocol Completed:** NWSC intern, Emily Bishop provided a presentation on the boat-based protocol for bull kelp surveys in Puget Sound that she developed. Field testing will be completed in October.

- Eelgrass Wasting Disease: Friday Harbor Labs is currently monitoring eelgrass wasting disease. The Samish Indian Nation will be working with Friday Harbor labs to do some monitoring and testing for the disease in Fidalgo Bay.

Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) Report: *Provided by Jay*

- NWSF Executive Director: Robyn du Pre, the NWSF Executive Director, is resigning as of September 30th due to serious health issues. The Foundation is currently seeking a new Executive Director. The posting can be viewed on the Foundation website: <http://www.nwstraits.org/uploads/images/Foundation/EDJobPosting2014NWSF.pdf>.
- New Policy Development: The Foundation Board is currently in the process of developing policies for gift acceptance because of the costs and risks associated with accepting some gifts. They are also developing a policy for working with other entities on projects. When is a competitive process required? What about sole source? Can entities act as a partner, advisor, or do pro bono work on a project?
- Strategic Plan: The Foundation Board is in the process of finalizing their Strategic Plan.
- San Juan Island Reception: September 10th from 5:00pm to 6:30pm at the San Juan Community Theatre at Friday harbor. State Senator Kevin Ranker's will give a talk to wrap up the Climate Action summer speaker series. The community will also get a chance to learn more about the NWSF.
- Cornet Bay Shoreline Restoration Open House: September 18, Cornet Bay Deception Pass State Park. Everyone is invited to celebrate the completion of the initial phase of a three-phase nearshore restoration project. Please RSVP Heidi Lehman at 360-733-1725 and lehman@nwstraits.org effort.

Administrative Report: *Provided by Tracy Alker*

- MRC Grant Amendment: The current MRC grant has been amended and is now waiting signatures.
- Oil Spill Response and Preparedness Workshops: The Northwest Straits Foundation is in the process of developing the next series of oil spill response and preparedness workshops that will take place sometime this fall. The goal of workshops will be to build an understanding of the response process amongst local resource managers and elected officials. This need was identified after the workshops held last year. We are looking for suggestions on topic ideas and who to invite.
- MRC Video: The Natural Resources Division intern at the County is currently working on producing a few short 10-15 minute videos that feature some of the County Clean Water programs that will be posted on Skagit 21. The Committee discussed the possibility of creating one about the MRC. Contact Tracy if you have any ideas for the script or projects to highlight or if you would be interested in being interviewed. The video would be posted on Skagit 21, the MRC website, and Youtube.
- Fundraising: Tracy met with Jill Clark from the Northwest Straits Foundation to discuss a few potential ideas for developing a plan to increase funding capacity including: who we could approach for donations, hosting a film or lecture event/or series, partner with restaurants to host an event or celebrate a major milestone such as completing an important project, etc.... Please contact Tracy if you have any ideas.
- MRC Membership: The Committee discussed recruiting new MRC members. It was suggested that it would be a good idea to limit the number of committee members to a maximum of around 15. Mainly because it is more difficult to consistently have quorums and reach consensus if the committee is too large. We currently have 9 voting MRC members. Committee members must be able commit to having an active role and provide an alternate for those meetings they are unable to attend. Current MRC members were asked to think about who they could assign as their own alternate. Per Resolution 17433 establishing the MRC, membership must have relevant scientific expertise and balanced representation from:
 - Local government especially planning staff from counties and cities with marine shorelines
 - Affected economic interests such as port, commercial fishers
 - Affected recreational interests such as sport fishers
 - Conservation and environmental interests
 - Local tribes
 - Constructive and knowledgeable individuals

2014 - 2015 MRC/NWSC Grant Proposal Revisions: The consensus of the Skagit MRC was to approve the following revisions to the 2014-2015 MRC/NWSC Grant Proposal.

- **Skagit MRC Operations:** Increase the budget from \$12,100 to \$13,500 to help cover costs for display updates, supplies, special events, and staff time.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** Kari volunteered to replace Ric Boge temporarily as the project lead for the 2015 Fidalgo Bay Day.
- **Pinto Abalone Restoration:** Increased the budget from \$10,000 to \$12,600 to include the Passive Integrated Transponders Tag Field Trial Surveys that was originally proposed.
- **Salish Sea Stewards:** Reduce the budget from \$20,000 to \$18,000 to help support other projects.
- **Beach Naturalist Program:** Incorporating the Beach Naturalist program into the schools as originally proposed, does not appear to be feasible at this time, so an alternate proposal would need to be developed and adopted. Unfortunately, Liz can no longer be the project lead, and no other MRC members were able to take on that role, so the Beach Naturalist Program was deleted from the proposal. The MRC recognized the importance of continuing the coordination of the existing Beach Naturalist volunteers. The consensus of the Committee was to include the coordination of the existing Beach Naturalist volunteers in the Salish Sea Stewards proposal. In the meantime, Liz will try to continue to work with the schools and other organizations with similar programs, to see if there is a way we can incorporate the Beach Naturalist program into the school curriculum next year. The \$5,000 originally allocated to this project will be used to help support other MRC projects (Skagit MRC Operations, Abalone Restoration, and Nearshore Restoration Monitoring).
- **Nearshore Restoration Monitoring:** Increased the budget from \$1,400 to \$2,400 to help purchase monitoring equipment.

Project Status & Discussion:

- **Salish Sea Stewards:** Since graduation, the Salish Sea Stewards have been actively involved in several projects including forage fish monitoring at the Skagit MRC's Bowman Bay nearshore restoration site and several partner projects: forage fish surveys at the Department of Natural Resources Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve; Pacific Biodiversity Institute's harbor porpoise monitoring; Skagit Land Trust Great Blue Heron monitoring; Skagit Conservation District's Marine Biotoxin Monitoring; and Deception Pass State Park's Scotch Broom removal from Hope Island. They are currently planning a joint educational excursion with WSU Beach Watchers and Trail Docents to the Port Townsend Marine Center. Morty said that an advisory committee of all the funding partners will be meeting next week to discuss hiring a new Volunteer Coordinator at Padilla Bay, and asked the MRC if it would be okay if he was the MRC representative on the advisory committee. The Volunteer Coordinator at Padilla Bay will be coordinating the Salish Sea Stewards and Beach Naturalists for the Skagit MRC. The consensus of the MRC was for Morty to be the MRC representative on the advisory committee.
- **Beach Naturalists:** There are currently eight very enthusiastic Beach Naturalists who are actively involved in the program. The Beach Naturalists developed a design for interpretive signage at Washington Park to help continue building awareness of the marine environment and educating the public on proper beach etiquette. Nancy provided two different design options that she passed around for approval from the MRC. They are currently looking into different funding options.
- **Shannon Point Riprap Removal Feasibility Study:** Lisa Kaufman, Joan Drinkwin, and Jim Johannessen met with some of the neighbors who live in the Sunset Cove community adjacent to our proposed Shannon Point Restoration project to address their concerns regarding the potential erosion of the bluff once the riprap is removed. That meeting was followed up with the City Council study session where Gary Robinson presented the project issues to the Council. A great deal of concern was expressed regarding the potential for erosion of the bluff once the riprap is removed. It is very important to have community support. So, CGS sketched out a couple of alternatives that will provide continued long-term protection to the bluff. The preferred alternative is to remove all the riprap as currently planned, but moving the southern section of rock inland along the toe of the bluff to create a retaining wall. This wall would be located on the uplands and it would be a very long time before the water ever touched the base of the wall. Building a retaining wall, additional design studies, and potential wetland impacts will add to the project costs. The Foundation would really appreciate getting a few letters of support.
- **Bowman Bay Riprap Removal Feasibility Study:** Coastal Geologic Services completed the feasibility report and 60% design. The preferred alternative is to remove most of the riprap, except the rock that buttresses the pier, and provide a curved pathway to allow for more vegetation to be planted. The next step is to start the permitting process. The goal is to have all the permit applications submitted by

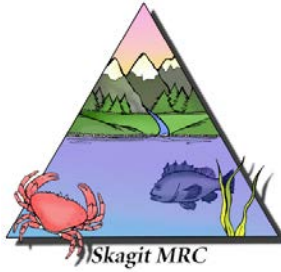
the end of August. The contractor is interested in possibly reusing the rock, which will help save money.

- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** WSU Beach Watcher Beckie Arnold has volunteered to take the lead in coordinating the Fidalgo Bay Day event. Lin Folsom is working with local restaurants to provide samples of chowder and will also obtain the necessary permits from the Health Department, and will reserve the hand washing station. Posters have been printed and are being distributed. Several organizations with educational displays have confirmed their participation. The event will be held at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort on September 13.
- **Native Oyster Restoration:** Oyster cultch bags were deployed in Fidalgo Bay and Padilla Bay and surveyed for new oyster settlement. Preliminary results indicate that there is very little Olympia oyster settlement in Padilla Bay. The oysters are doing well in Fidalgo Bay. Additional seeding will likely occur at Cap Sante Marina. The Native Oyster Restoration project is currently being funded in part with Skagit Restoration Initiative funds.
- **NW March's Point Beach Enhancement:** The permitting is complete and the NW Marchs Point project is finally out to bid! Bids are due on August 20 at 2:00pm. The property owner decided they do not want all of the rock around the boat ramp removed. Pete Haase and his crew of volunteers have done at least one forage fish survey at the project site in the last month. They saw a few eggs when they looked at the samples with the microscopes, but did not see any visual evidence of spawning at the site. Dan Penttila will also be conducting a pre-construction spawning survey for us per Hydraulic Project Approval (HPA) requirements. Construction will likely take place this September, 2014.
- **Marine Shoreline Protection Assessment:** Wrapping up the assessments of existing data for high priority areas for protection. Mapping will start next week. Kari will present the results in the fall.

Miscellaneous Events and Announcements:

- **Fidalgo Bay Science Conference:** The Samish Indian Nation Department of Natural Resources is hosting a Science Conference at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort on October 23. Abstracts are due tomorrow, August 15! Please RSVP Erin Licata at elicata@samishtribe.nsn.us if you are interested in attending.
- **Fidalgo Bay Causeway:** The WA Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is applying for grant funding for the feasibility study/design for the removal of fill at the Fidalgo Bay Causeway as part of the 2-tier enhancement. DNR is seeking letters of support and technical expertise. The Fidalgo Bay causeway removal/replacement project will involve several phases. The City of Anacortes will be the project lead to ensure the community remains involved and informed.
- **City of Anacortes Stormwater Master Plan Updates:** Seeking public comments.
- **MJB Waterfront Workshop:** The workshop will be held Tuesday, August 26, 2014 from 6:00pm – 8:00pm at the City Hall Council Chambers in Anacortes. The purpose of the workshop is to seek public input for shaping the future of the MJB waterfront sites in Anacortes. The public can also submit written comments anytime: email CompPlan2016@cityofanacortes.org. The findings will be incorporated into the City of Anacortes 2016 Comprehensive Plan.
- **Oil by Rail Safety:** The City of Anacortes recently passed the Oil by Rail Safety Resolution. The City will continue to work with the State and Feds to address concerns about potential impacts to water supplies.

The meeting adjourned at 11:20 a.m. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, September 11, 2014, at the Skagit County Administration Building in Mount Vernon.



Skagit County Marine Resources Committee

Minutes of the September 11, 2014 meeting held at the Skagit County Administration Building in Mount Vernon

Members Attending: Tracy Alker, Jay Lind, Teri Switalski, Morty Cohen, Liz Lovelett, Kari Odden, Aundrea McBride (Julie Barber's alternate)

Members Absent: Paul Dinnel, Julie Barber, Christine Woodward, Betsy Stevenson

Others Attending: Jason Morgan, Northwest Straits Foundation; Pete Haase, citizen/volunteer; Leah Kintner, Puget Sound Partnership; Jamey Selleck, Hart Crowser

Call to Order and Introductions: Kari Odden began the meeting at 9:05 a.m.

Minutes: Approved as written

Public Comments: None

Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Report: *Provided by Jay*

- National Estuaries Program Review: The Puget Sound Partnership (PSP) just completed a review of the United States Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) National Estuaries Program, our primary source of funding. Ginny Broadhurst did an excellent job highlighting the work of the MRCs.
- MRC Conference: The annual MRC Conference will be held December 5-6 at the Northwest Maritime Center in Port Townsend. The conference agenda will be posted on the NWSC website.

Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) Report: *Provided by Jay*

- San Juan Island Reception/NWSF Fundraiser: The reception/fundraiser was held September 10th at the San Juan Community Theatre. State Senator Kevin Ranker's gave a presentation on climate change and Joan gave a presentation about the Foundation. Around 150 people attended the event.
- Cornet Bay Shoreline Restoration Open House: September 18, Cornet Bay Deception Pass State Park. Everyone is invited to celebrate the completion of the initial phase of a three-phase nearshore restoration project.
- Landowner Incentive's Grant: The Foundation was recently awarded the Landowner Incentive's Grant and will be working with the MRCs to develop and implement landowner workshops to reduce/prevent shoreline armoring.

Administrative Report: *Provided by Tracy Alker*

- Grant Deliverables Due - Sept 15!: Please report your volunteer hours and project updates as soon as possible.
- New MRC Grant: The draft grant agreement is ready for review. The contract start date will likely be in October. The total amount is for \$73k not \$75k as originally thought.

Forage Fish Monitoring at the Custom Plywood Remediation Site: *Provided by Jamey Selleck*

- **Background:** The former Custom Plywood mill was built on creosoted pilings and fill over the intertidal zone along the Fidalgo Bay shoreline. The mill was in operation in the early 1900's until 1991. During the time of operation there were several spills and leaks and two fires that heavily contaminated the sediments with dioxins, PAHs, petroleum, metals, and wood waste. The site was sponsored as part of the Puget Sound Initiative's Toxic Cleanup Program. WA Department of Ecology initiated the cleanup of the site in cooperation with the property owners which included excavating and dredging 50,000 tons of contaminated sediment and removing creosote treated pilings. As part of Phase II of the remediation, fish habitat (sand, cobble, gravel mix) material was imported to the site. In addition, a wetland mitigation area, vegetated buffer zone and stormwater bio-swale were constructed.
- **Forage Fish Monitoring:** Forage fish (i.e. surf smelt, herring, and sand lance) are the primary food source for many marine fish, birds, and mammals. Records indicate that forage fish have been spawning along the shoreline of the Custom Plywood site since 1992. Herrera was contracted to conduct forage fish spawning habitat surveys using the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) protocols. Five sites and one reference site were surveyed weekly. Surf smelt are typically nighttime summer spawners and sand lance are winter spawners. Prior to remediation, surf smelt spawning was observed between June and September on boulders, bricks, cobble and wood waste. The eggs at the five sites were exposed to the sun and contaminants and most of the eggs sampled were not viable. Reports indicated 90-100% mortality prior to remediation. Construction was completed in late November, 2013. Monitoring continued post-remediation and results showed a big improvement in surf smelt egg development and survival rates. In addition, the number and diversity of nearshore fish and wildlife increased near the site. The Samish Indian Nation is currently working with Ecology to plant taller trees for better shade to help enhance the nearshore habitat and increase survival rates of forage fish eggs. Forage fish monitoring will continue into 2016 and could extend another 10 years to track egg development and monitor sand lance spawning.
- **Other Monitoring:** Groundwater monitoring at six stations, eelgrass monitoring, wetland and vegetation monitoring, beach seining for nearshore fish use and plankton sampling. For more information about the project, contact Hun Seak Park or Sandra Caldwell with the WA Department of Ecology.

Project Status & Discussion:

- **Salish Sea Stewards/Beach Naturalists:** Salish Sea Stewards and Beach Naturalists have contributed over 200 service hours. The final project report has been completed. A volunteer appreciation lunch will be held September 23 at the Fidalgo Bay Resort. The Padilla Bay Foundation's new Volunteer Coordinator position has been advertised. Applications will be accepted through next Friday.
- **Shannon Point Riprap Removal:** The Foundation will meet with Western Washington University to discuss options for alternate designs.
- **Bowman Bay Riprap Removal Feasibility Study:** Drafts of the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) checklist and Joint Aquatic Resource Permits Application (JARPA) for county and Corps permitting have been submitted to State Parks for their review and input. Parks will issue a determination for the SEPA process (likely a 'determination of non-significance') and then the SEPA notice will be posted for public comment. The public comment period is usually 21 days. Once SEPA is completed, we can apply for the Hydraulic Permit Approval (HPA) from WDFW and also start the process of applying for permits with Skagit County. A pre-application meeting will be set up with the County to identify all permits that will be needed.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** The event will be held this Saturday, September 13 at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm. Volunteers can check in and help set up between 9 am and 10:30 am.
- **Native Oyster Restoration:** Nothing new to report.
- **NW March's Point Beach Enhancement:** Hired a contractor for the beach nourishment project. They will provide a sample of the beach nourishment material they intend to use for approval prior to construction. A press release will be issued to announce the project. Construction will take place this fall. As soon as a start date is determined, Dan Penttila will conduct an official forage fish survey. If no eggs are found, work must begin within 48 hours. Coastal Geologic Services will provide construction oversight and will also provide as-built drawings following project completion.

- **Marine Shoreline Protection Assessment:** The final report is complete and will be made available on the MRC website.
- **Monitoring Plan:** Jason was hired by the Foundation to complete the monitoring plans for Bowman Bay and Shannon Point which include the following parameters: forage fish surveys, beach profiles, photo-points to document sediment changes, beach seine sampling for nearshore fish use, and wrack line changes. These monitoring plans will be available Monday and can be used as templates for the other project sites as well as the Fidalgo Bay monitoring for the Skagit Restoration Initiative. The Quality Assurance/Quality Control will likely need to be modified as we go. Jason will work with the volunteers and provide training. The Foundation will provide insurance coverage for volunteers working on monitoring and other projects administered through the Foundation.

Miscellaneous Events and Announcements:

- Friends of Skagit Beaches Film Fundraiser “Making a Documentary: the Story Behind the Camera” Friday, October 2, 2014, 6:00-8:30pm at the NW Education Services District Building in Anacortes. Buy tickets online before October 2. www.skagitbeaches.org

The meeting adjourned at 10:50 a.m. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, October 9, 2014, at the Fidalgo Bay Resort in Anacortes.



SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the **October 9, 2014** meeting, held at the Fidalgo Bay Resort in Anacortes (9:00am to 11:00am)

Attendees:

- **MRC Members Attending:** Tracy Alker, Betsy Stevenson, Jay Lind, Julie Barber, Christine Woodward, Morty Cohen, Liz Lovelett, Kari Odden
- **MRC Members Absent:** Paul Dinnel, Teri Switalski
- **Others Attending:** Jamey Selleck, Hart Crowser; Betty Carteret, Friends of Skagit Beaches; Erin Licata, Samish Indian Nation DNR; Catherine Buchalski, WSU Skagit Beach Watchers; Richard Brocksmith, Skagit Watershed Council

Call to Order and Introduction: Kari Odden chaired the meeting which began at 9:12 a.m. Kari noted that the guest speaker, Laura James, was unable to give her presentation today, but will present at next month's meeting.

Approval of Minutes: The September 11 MRC meeting minutes were approved as written.

Public Comments: Betty Carteret, President of the Friends of Skagit Beaches, requested feedback from the MRC about whether or not nominating Skagit Bay as a Marine Sanctuary might be worth looking into. The Committee agreed that more information is needed before they could support it.

Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Report: Provided by Jay Lind

(The NWSC meeting was held September 26 from 10am to 3pm in Bellingham)

- **NWSC Northwest Straits Initiative Strategic Plan:** The Strategic Plan was officially adopted. MRC's can continue to submit projects for inclusion in the Plan through January 2015.
- **MRC Conference:** The annual MRC Conference will be held December 5-6 at the Northwest Maritime Center in Port Townsend. The conference agenda has been posted on the NWSC website www.nwstraits.org/2014-mrc-conference. Registration deadline is: **November 7**. The conference is free for MRC members. Hotel and travel expenses for MRC members will be covered under the Skagit MRC grant at the Government Per Diem rate. MRC members are responsible for making their own reservations. Hotel invoices and ferry receipts will be required for reimbursement.
- **New Websites:** The [Northwest Straits Commission](http://www.nwstraits.org) and [Clallam MRC](http://www.clallam-mrc.org) launched new websites.
- **Vessel Traffic Risk Assessment:** Results from the 2010 Vessel Traffic Risk Assessment for Puget Sound were presented at the NWSC meeting. Potential risks and mitigation measures were identified including the concern that many of the oil container ships are single walled and could potentially puncture easily.
- **Next NWSC meeting:** WebEx conference call will be held on October 25.

Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) Report: Provided by Jay Lind

(The Foundation Board meeting was held October 3 from 10am until 1pm)

- **NWSF Executive Director:** Robyn DuPre officially resigned from her position as the NWSF Executive Director on September 30th. Joan Drinkwin will be the Interim Director until the position is filled. An appreciation lunch was held for Robyn after the meeting.
- **NWSF Strategic Plan:** It is anticipated that the NWSF Strategic Plan will be finalized and adopted soon.
- **NWSF Gift Acceptance Policy** was adopted.

Administrative Report: Provided by Tracy Alker

- **New MRC Grant:** Still waiting to get authorized signatories into the new online system. The grant will have a start date of October 1, but won't likely get signed until November.
- **MRC Presentation:** MRCs have been asked to provide a 10 minute presentation on a current or developing project at the MRC Conference in December. Morty Cohen volunteered to provide a presentation on the Salish Sea Stewards/Beach Naturalists program. The MRC will get a chance to review Morty's presentation and provide feedback at the MRC meeting in November.
- **MRC Gift Basket:** Liz Lovelett volunteered to be in charge of the Skagit MRC gift basket for the NWSF silent auction at the MRC conference. MRC members are encouraged to help contribute towards the gift basket. Liz will collect items for the locally themed gift basket at the November 13 MRC meeting.

- **MRC Display Update:** The MRC display will be updated for the MRC conference. The posters will highlight Skagit MRC's nearshore restoration projects and upcoming Pinto Abalone restoration work.
- **New MRC Membership:** A closed session was held following the regular meeting to discuss two applicants for potential MRC membership. The consensus of the Committee was to make the recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to appoint Jamey Selleck as a new member of Skagit MRC and appoint Pete Haase as Morty Cohen's alternate.

Project Status & Discussion

- **Salish Sea Stewards/Beach Naturalists:** A volunteer appreciation lunch was held for the Salish Sea Stewards/Beach Naturalists (SSS/BN) at the Fidalgo Bay Resort on September 23. Nancy Olsen presented the volunteers with a special 'thank you' gift of marine themed coasters. Nancy's contract has expired so Morty volunteered to continue providing program updates and volunteer opportunities to the SSS/BN volunteers until the new volunteer is hired at Padilla Bay. They have received 25 applications.
- **Shannon Point Riprap Removal:** Nothing new to report.
- **Bowman Bay Riprap Removal Feasibility Study:** Nothing new to report.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** Over 338 visitors attended this year's event! Former MRC member Ric Boge was the project lead and in charge of planning and coordinating the event. Ric did an excellent job and accomplished a lot before having to resign due to serious health issues. Kari gave Beckie Arnold special recognition for taking the lead after Ric had to step down. Tracy thanked Kari for hosting the MRC display and the Samish Indian Nation for hosting the event at their resort. A big 'Thank You' also goes out to the 50 volunteers and the 18 participating organizations and partners who helped make this event a huge success. Wayne Huseby wrote a really nice letter to the editor in the Anacortes American newspaper, thanking everyone involved. Wayne also deserves special recognition for completing the Fidalgo Bay Day report which looks really great! Planning for next year's event is currently underway. It will likely be held August 29th at the Fidalgo Bay Resort next year because there were conflicts with the dates in September. Please contact Kari or Tracy if you would like to participate on the planning committee.
- **Native Oyster Restoration:** Nothing new to report.
- **Marine Shoreline Protection Assessment:** The final report is now available on the Skagit MRC website. Kari will present the report at a future MRC meeting.
- **NW March's Point Beach Enhancement:** Construction is now complete. Pete Haase and other volunteers have been sampling the site for forage fish eggs prior to construction, but have not found anything yet. Forage Fish expert Dan Pentilla completed an official survey prior to construction, per permit requirements. Long-term post-construction monitoring will begin soon.



Miscellaneous Events and Announcements

- **Fidalgo Bay Science Conference:** October 23 at the Fidalgo Bay Resort, 9:00am to 4:30pm. RSVP Erin Licata at elicata@samishtribe.nsn.us.
- **Friends of Skagit Beaches Free Film Screening:** "The Last Ocean" Friday, October 10, 2014, 7:00pm at the NW Education Services District Building in Anacortes. View the trailer at www.thelastoceanfilm.com.
- **WSU Skagit County Beach Watchers Final Farewell Potluck Luncheon:** October 15, at the Anacortes Yacht Club from 12:30pm to 2:30pm.
- **Skagit Watershed Council Meeting:** November 12, 9:00am to 12:00pm at the Skagit PUD building in Mount Vernon. The meetings are open to the public and they will likely have a guest speaker.
- **Ric Boge Tree Planting:** Saturday, November 15, 10:00am to 1:00pm. RSVP Kari Odden at the Skagit Land Trust: kario@skagitlandtrust.org.

The meeting adjourned at 10:50 a.m. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, November 13, 2014, at the Skagit County Administration Building in Mount Vernon.



SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the **November 13, 2014** meeting, held at the Skagit County Administration Building in Mount Vernon
(9:00am to 11:00am)

Attendees:

- **MRC Members Attending:** Tracy Alker, Betsy Stevenson, Jay Lind, Julie Barber, Christine Woodward, Liz Lovelett, Kari Odden, Jamey Selleck, *Pete Haase (Morty's Alternate), Paul Dinnel
- **MRC Members Absent:** Teri Switalski, Morty Cohen
- **Others Attending:** Todd Woodard, Samish Indian Nation DNR; Lisa Kaufman, NWSF; Kimberly Cauvel; Bob Fritzen, WA DOE; Laura James, Diver/videographer

Call to Order and Introduction: Kari Odden chaired the meeting which began at 9:12 a.m.

Approval of Minutes: The October 9 MRC meeting minutes were approved as written.

Public Comments: None

Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Report: Provided by Christine Woodward

(The NWSC meeting was a WebEx Conference Call held October 24th (10am -12noon))

- **MRC Conference:** The annual MRC Conference will be held December 5-6 at the Northwest Maritime Center in Port Townsend. The conference agenda has been posted on the NWSC website www.nwstraits.org/2014-mrc-conference. Registration deadline was: November 7. Plenary sessions will include: nearshore marine habitat protection, sea level rise, oil transport, and endangered species recovery. * Please note that MRC members can only be reimbursed at government per diem rates for Jefferson County, which is \$95 per night for lodging.
- **NWSC Strategic Planning:** MRCs are encouraged to add new projects in the "Projects and Actions" context of the Strategic Plan through January 2015. There will be an opportunity for MRCs to share and discuss the plan at the conference.
- **New NWSC Website Launch:** www.nwstraits.org. Please let Sasha know if there are any broken links.
- **Marine Disease Emergency Act:** In response to the sea star wasting disease, a bill was recently introduced that authorizes the Secretary of Commerce to identify, declare, and respond to marine disease emergencies. The Commission agreed to endorse the Seattle Aquarium's letter supporting the bill.
- **Restoring America's Estuaries (RAE) Conference:** The RAE Conference was held in Washington DC during the first week of November. Christine, Ginny, Joan, Lisa, and Holly attended. The issues are very different on the east coast compared to the Pacific Northwest. We are doing a lot of really great work out here.
- **Salish Sea International Kelp Alliance:** Officially launched in October. The goal is to raise awareness and promote conservation.
- **External Relations Committee:** The goal for 2015 is to have regular communications with local elected officials, to ensure they are aware of the important work of the MRC and its relationship to the NW Straits initiative. The NWSC will work with MRCs to help organize project site tours for elected officials in 2015.
- **Next NWSC meeting:** January 30th in Island County.

Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) Report: Provided by Jay Lind

- **NW Straits Foundation Director:** The Foundation has not filled the Executive Director position yet. They decided to take a short break before continuing the search for a new Executive Director. In the meantime, Joan Drinkwin will act as Interim Director.

Administrative Report: Provided by Tracy Alker

- **New MRC Grant:** The grant has been signed. The official start date is October 1. We are in the process of drafting new contracts for grant related projects.
- **New MRC Membership:** The Board of County Commissioners signed the resolution appointing Jamey

Selleck as a new member of Skagit MRC and Pete Haase as Morty Cohen's alternate.

- **Oil Spill Response and Preparedness Workshop:** The NWSF hired a consultant to work with the MRCs to coordinate part 2 of the oil spill workshops which will likely take place sometime in January, February, or March 2015. The main purpose of this workshop is to help local officials and emergency personnel understand their role in an oil spill incident. Please let Tracy know if there are any topics of concern that you think should be covered at the workshop.
- **December 11th MRC Meeting:** The MRC Conference is December 5 and 6, less than one week before the December 11th MRC meeting, so the Committee discussed whether or not to have the MRC meeting in December. It was decided that we should go ahead and have the December 11th MRC meeting and make it a holiday potluck celebration.
- **Padilla Bay Volunteer Program:** The new Padilla Bay volunteer program has not been named yet. The question was brought up as to whether or not the Padilla Bay volunteer program should be called the Salish Sea Stewards, or if that name should only be applied to the Skagit MRC volunteer training program that is based at Padilla Bay. The Committee decided to continue this discussion at the December MRC meeting.

Underwater Explorer & Videographer, Laura James

Laura James, an avid diver and videographer, has captured amazing underwater footage ranging from stormwater pollution, to seastar wasting disease, and an Emmy Award winning piece on sea otters, for several non-profits, Public Broadcasting Service, KCTS 9, and many others. During one of her diving expeditions, Laura documented a large black swirling plume of stormwater runoff dumping into Puget Sound through an outfall at Alki Beach. After learning about all of the pollutants in stormwater, Laura felt compelled to share her stormwater video with as many people as possible so everyone could see what she was seeing. Laura partnered with Cate White to become Co-Director of Tox-Ick (www.tox-ick.org), a grassroots outreach and education program to help educate local residents about the problem of polluted runoff and what actions individuals can take to stop it. For those who are interested in engaging their communities in the fight against pollution in Puget Sound there are free outreach resources available through the program including: a power point presentation, handouts, videos, and access to the Tox-Ick website to post events, press coverage, and blog posts. Laura said that she is willing to give presentations and consultations to anyone who is interested. Although the Tox-Ick program focuses on urban stormwater runoff, Laura is also interested in expanding the program to include water quality issues associated with rural and agricultural areas and is currently seeking input. To request a Tox-Ick presentation, resources, or to get more involved, contact Laura at laura@tox-ick.org.

If citizen scientists are interested in exploring beneath the marine waters, without becoming a certified diver, they can build their own Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) by purchasing a do it yourself kit through www.OpenROV.com. Observations from the ROVs can be recorded and posted on the Open Explorer website: www.openexplorer.com, which has posts from over 50 countries. Laura said she would be willing to give an ROV demonstration at Fidalgo Bay Day.

Project Status & Discussion

- **Salish Sea Stewards/Beach Naturalists:** The Padilla Bay Foundation hired Catherine Buchalski as the new Volunteer Coordinator. A contract with Padilla Bay is currently being drafted for the Salish Sea Stewards/Beach Naturalist program. The Padilla Bay Facility has been reserved for Salish Sea Stewards training: Thursdays, March 5 - April 30. The time of trainings will depend on our target audience. Retirees are pretty flexible with times. If we are targeting working adults, evenings would be best. Catherine will be meeting with Skagit Valley College and Anacortes Schools to find out if they would be interested in participating in the training, and if so, what times would work best for them (ie afternoon or evening classes). The subcommittee will be meeting in December to confirm the training time/dates and start developing the program promotion and curriculum.
- **Shannon Point Riprap Removal:** The Northwest Straits Foundation met with the City and Western Washington University to discuss the redesign and to look at the possibility of reusing the rock upland as a retaining wall to give the property owners a little more assurance for protection. The City is looking into the possibility of using the retaining wall to help enhance trail access. The Foundation is currently waiting for approval of the project redesign. The redesign will not include the trail design. Once the design is approved, the Foundation will start looking for funding for construction.

- **Bowman Bay Riprap Removal Feasibility Study:** The Northwest Straits Foundation will likely have to hire someone to do a Biological Assessment.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** Planning for next year's event is currently underway. The Fidalgo Bay Resort has been reserved for August 29th. There are no dates in September that will work because of conflicts with other events and facility availability. Unfortunately, Denise Crowe and students will not be available to bring the Shannon Point Marine Center's portable aquarium on August 29th. The Planning Committee is currently looking into other fun hands on activities that can take the place of the portable aquarium. Please contact Tracy or Kari if you have any suggestions or ideas. Some of the ideas that were suggested include: Samish canoe rides, an ROV demonstration along the shoreline with Laura James, a showing of the Seastar Wasting Disease and/or other educational videos produced by Laura James, and taking people out on the Samish Indian Nation's boat for an ROV demonstration.
- **Native Oyster Restoration:** The Puget Sound Restoration Fund staff and a few volunteers will be going out Monday, November 24th to survey oysters for natural recruitment during the low evening tides. Let Paul know if you are interested in helping out.
- **Pinto Abalone Restoration:** Drafted a contract with the Puget Sound Restoration Fund.
- **Nearshore Restoration Monitoring:** Pete Haase and crew continue to monitor surf smelt at several MRC restoration sites: NW March's Point, Shannon Point, and Bowman Bay. The Northwest Straits Foundation plans to have a joint training with other MRCs to make the training more robust and consistent across the region. The Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve will conduct intertidal monitoring training in April, which could be a great opportunity to combine the training with the Salish Sea Stewards to conduct intertidal monitoring at Bowman Bay.
- **Shoreline Landowner Workshop:** A conference call with the Foundation and other MRCs will be held Monday, November 24 at 3:00pm.

Miscellaneous Events and Announcements

- **Ric Boge Tree Planting:** Saturday, November 15, 10:00am to 1:00pm on Green Road.
- **Draft Habitat Conservation Plan Informational Meeting:** Wednesday, November 19th, 6:00pm to 8:00pm at the Salvation Army in Anacortes (3001 R Ave #100, 2nd floor). The deadline for public comments is December 4.
- **Friends of Skagit Beaches Free Film Screening:** November 21 at 7pm at the NW Education Services. Featuring the film, "The Whale" the true story of Luna. Watch the trailer at www.thewhalemovie.com. Also enjoy another short film premier produced by the Friends of Skagit Beaches about the Fidalgo Bay watershed and water quality.
- **Storming the Sound:** January 29, 2015 at Maple Hall, La Conner. 9:00am – 4:30pm.
- **Shore Stewards Workshop:** WSU in partnership with the Skagit Conservation District are planning a Shore Stewards Workshop on February 7 at Padilla Bay. The primary focus of the workshop will be on water quality and 5 of the 10 Guidelines for Shoreline Living.
- **Padilla Bay Foundation Quilt Raffle:** The Padilla Bay Foundation board members are selling \$5 raffle tickets for a beautiful handcrafted estuarine themed quilt made by Linn Woodard, Todd Woodard's mother. The raffle began in August and will conclude in early December.

The meeting adjourned at 10:50 a.m. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, December 11, 2014, at the Fidalgo Bay Resort in Anacortes.



SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the **December 11, 2014** meeting, held at the Fidalgo Bay Resort in Anacortes (9:00am to 11:00am)

Attendees:

- **MRC Members Attending:** Tracy Alker, Morty Cohen, Jay Lind, Christine Woodward, Liz Lovelett, Kari Odden, Paul Dinnel
- **MRC Members Absent:** Teri Switalski, Betsy Stevenson, Julie Barber, Jamey Selleck
- **Others Attending:** Todd Woodard, Samish Indian Nation DNR; Nathan Biletnikoff, Shell Refinery; Sharon Riggs, Padilla Bay NERR

Call to Order and Introduction: Kari Odden chaired the meeting which began at 9:16 a.m.

Approval of Minutes: The November 15, MRC meeting minutes were approved as written.

Public Comments:

- Nathan Biletnikoff, Environmental Team Lead with the Shell Refinery in Anacortes, expressed an interest in getting more involved with the MRC and the Northwest Straits Commission. Tracy will send Nate an MRC membership application. The Committee discussed the potential to collaborate on projects in the future.
- Sharron Riggs, Stewardship Coordinator with the Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR), is in the process of updating the Natural Resources Stewardship section of the NERR's Management Plan with input from stakeholders, including the Skagit MRC. She also noted that the Request for Proposals for the Coastal Zone Management grant will be coming out soon for projects within the National Estuarine Research Reserves. The grant would be a great opportunity for the Skagit MRC and other stakeholders to work collaboratively on a project at the Padilla Bay Estuarine Research Reserve. Sharron recommended that a technical advisory committee be established to develop the proposal. Sharron offered to give a presentation about this opportunity at the January or February MRC meeting.

Northwest Straits/MRC Conference Report:

The annual MRC Conference was held December 5-6 at the Northwest Maritime Center in Port Townsend. Skagit MRC members who attended the conference include: Christine, Jay, Morty, Paul, Jamey, Liz, and Tracy. The conference agenda, presentations, and photos have been posted on the NWSC website: www.nwstraits.org/2014-mrc-conference. It was an excellent conference and covered a lot of new and interesting topics including: kelp, eelgrass, shellfish, sea level rise, oil and coal transport, pinto abalone, herring, tufted puffins, monitoring and mapping as well as a variety of MRC projects. The conference kicked off Friday morning with a cruise to explore Jefferson County MRC's restoration projects and wintering birds. Opening remarks were provided by Jamestown S'Klallam Tribal Elder, Marlin Holden. Morty gave an excellent presentation on the Salish Sea Stewards. The presentation was well received and sparked several conversations with other MRCs. The conference was a great opportunity to network and learn what projects other MRCs are working on and opportunities to collaborate on future projects. The Skagit MRC discussed having a joint meeting with the Whatcom MRC and/or Island MRC to identify potential collaborative projects such as kelp and eelgrass monitoring.

A survey was sent out to all conference participants. The survey results will help with planning next year's conference. Liz suggested that at next year's conference it would be great to have a presentation on how to take science and turn it into policy points to make a measurable difference. This is an important topic to cover because there currently seems to be a disconnection between the science and policy makers.

A big 'Thank You' goes out to the event sponsors and everyone who donated items to the silent auction. A special thanks goes to Liz for assembling the beautiful Skagit MRC gift basket. Over \$8,000 was raised at the Northwest Straits Foundation's silent auction that will go towards supporting the Foundation and MRC projects. Jay noted that the Northwest Straits Foundation also received a private donation of \$106,000 for the derelict gear removal project and another large donation of \$50,000 that went to support the Foundation and MRCs.

Administrative Report: *Provided by Tracy Alker*

- **Contracts:** We are still in the process of getting contracts in place with the Padilla Bay Foundation for the Salish Sea Stewards/Beach Naturalist project; the Puget Sound Restoration Fund for the pinto abalone restoration project; and the Northwest Straits Foundation for the Bowman Bay nearshore restoration project, nearshore restoration monitoring, and the shoreline landowner workshops.
- **Grant Progress Reports:** Grant progress reports and volunteer hours are due January 16. Please submit your project updates and volunteer hours to Tracy no later than January 9 to get them posted into the new online system. Tracy will email the volunteer hour report forms.
- **New MRC Membership:** Tim Mann's submitted an MRC membership application to become Kari Odden's alternate and representative of the Skagit Land Trust. The unanimous consensus of the Committee was to make the recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to appoint Tim Manns as Kari Odden's alternate.
- **Oil Spill Response and Preparedness Workshop:** The Padilla Bay Reserve conference room has been reserved for February 25 from 1:00pm to 5:00pm. The consulting firm, Veda Environmental, has been contracted by the Northwest Straits Foundation to plan and coordinate the workshops. They are in the process of confirming speakers and finalizing the agenda. The main purpose of this workshop is to help local officials and emergency personnel understand their role in an oil spill incident. The workshops will also be open to MRC members and the public. Todd Woodard suggested that the MRC consider looking into the possibility of offering HAZWOPER training to volunteers who want to help with oil spills. Todd volunteered to look into the training requirements and costs, and recertification for volunteers.
- **MRC Officer Elections:** The Committee will need to appoint new MRC officers in January or February including: MRC Chair, MRC Vice-Chair, NWSC Rep, and NWSC Alt. Please consider who you would like to nominate, including yourself!
- **MRC Project Proposal Development:** Skagit MRC discussed the need to start identifying and prioritizing potential project ideas and developing new proposals in January or February for the next round of grant funding that will begin in October 2015.

Project Status & Discussion

- **Salish Sea Stewards/Beach Naturalists:** Morty gave a presentation that highlighted the Salish Sea Stewards/Beach Naturalists program and lessons learned at the MRC Conference. Morty, Tracy, and Pete had a meeting with Catherine Buchalski, the new Volunteer Coordinator, to start the planning process for the 2015 Salish Sea Stewards volunteer training program. The core training program will be around 40 hours (27 hours of in class training and 13 hours of hands-on training in the field). The classroom training will take place at the Padilla Bay Reserve Thursday afternoons from 3:00pm to 6:00pm starting March 5 through April 30, 2015. The primary target for the training will be retirees, but Catherine is also working with the schools and Skagit Valley College to recruit younger volunteers as well. Some of the classes will be optional and extended later into the evening and will be open to the public. The committee identified several priority topics will be covered and Catherine is in the process of contacting and confirming speakers for the training. The Padilla Bay Foundation will be meeting soon to finalize a name for the overall volunteer program at Padilla Bay to provide a unified identity for volunteers.
- **Shannon Point Nearshore Restoration:** The project redesign is currently being reviewed and awaiting approval by the City of Anacortes and Western Washington University. The redesign includes reusing the rock upland as a retaining wall to give the property owners a little more assurance for protection. The City is looking into the possibility of using the retaining wall to help enhance trail access, but it will not be included in the redesign. The Foundation is currently seeking funding for construction.
- **Bowman Bay Nearshore Restoration:** The Northwest Straits Foundation is currently going through the permitting process for the riprap removal at Bowman Bay. The Foundation is also applying for a \$15,000 education and outreach grant at selected shoreline restoration sites, including Bowman Bay. The proposal will most likely include interpretive signage and could also include the following: a special event/signage unveiling, and low-tide beach walks, website development, a video, outreach materials, volunteer planting parties, etc. The proposal is due December 16, 2014.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** The Fidalgo Bay Resort has been reserved for August 29th. There are no dates in September that will work because of conflicts with other events and facility availability. Please contact Tracy or Kari if you have any suggestions for fun hands on activities or if you would like to be a part of the planning committee. The planning committee will try to meet sometime in January.

- **Olympia Oyster Restoration:** Puget Sound Restoration Fund personnel sampled the four new oyster shell beds located north of the trestle in Fidalgo Bay in November. Early results suggest a substantial amount of native oyster recruitment from a summer 2014 spawning at and around the trestle. Oyster shell bags will be pulled again in May or June 2015. Paul Dinnel is working with other scientists in California, Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia, on a manuscript and presentation on native oyster recruitment variability along the Pacific Coast. The Fidalgo Bay Olympia Oyster dataset is the largest on the west coast.
- **Pinto Abalone Restoration:** Working on getting a signed contract with the Puget Sound Restoration Fund. Work will begin in the spring of 2015. Pinto abalone seeding and monitoring sites are located at Burrows and Allan Islands, as well as Cypress Island. In addition, tagged pinto abalone will be monitored at the Shannon Point Marine Center reef.
- **Nearshore Restoration Monitoring:** Volunteers will be trained to monitor beach profiles, take photo points, beach wrack analysis, sediment sampling, vegetation and woody debris, beach seining for nearshore fish use, and forage fish spawning surveys. Training will be offered to new and existing Salish Sea Stewards and Beach Watcher volunteers. We will look for opportunities to combine training with other MRCs and volunteer organizations, such as the Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve for the intertidal monitoring training. The County, on behalf of the Skagit MRC, will contract with the Northwest Straits Foundation to coordinate the training, monitoring, and data analysis.
- **Shoreline Landowner Workshop:** Betsy and Tracy attended the conference call with the Foundation and other MRCs that was held Monday, November 24 at 3:00pm. The Foundation has funding for two landowner workshops in Skagit County in addition to the workshop funded through the MRC grant (Puget Sound Partnership funding via the United States Environmental Protection Agency). The workshops will take place in the spring, summer, and fall of 2015. The Marine and Nearshore grant program is offering a few hours of consultation with a social marketing expert. The Foundation will work closely with the County Planning Department to plan the workshops, provide site visits/consultations to landowners, and provide assistance with project designs and permitting. Tracy and Betsy will meet with Lisa on December 12 to discuss the timeline and objectives for the workshops in Skagit County.
- **Sound IQ:** The County intern drafted an inventory of mapping data to be included in the Sound IQ data sharing program. Tracy will look into the possibility of hiring a technical intern with GIS experience to work with Suzanne to collect all of the Skagit MRC data and get it entered into the Sound IQ system.
- **Marine Protection Assessment:** Skagit Land Trust (SLT) recently received a grant from the Rose Foundation to take the next step in marine shoreline protection, using the Skagit MRC funded Marine Shoreline Protection Assessment as a foundation. The Rose Foundation Salish Sea Grant will enable SLT to build capacity for marine shoreline conservation, including the development of a legal template for shoreline conservation easements and the creation of landowner outreach materials. It will also fund a landowner outreach campaign and acquisition feasibility analyses for 3 to 5 priority shoreline parcels. Kari will give a presentation on the Marine Shoreline Protection Assessment project at the MRC meeting in January.

Miscellaneous Events and Announcements

- **Storming the Sound:** January 29, 2015 at Maple Hall, La Conner, 9:00am – 4:30pm.
- **Friends of Skagit Beaches Annual Meeting/Padilla Bay Volunteer Program Open House:** January 30, 2015 (11:30am to 3:00pm) at the Padilla Bay Reserve. The Open House will begin at 1:00pm. RSVP Catherine Buchalski cbuchalski@padillabay.gov.
- **Shore Stewards Workshop:** February 7, at Padilla Bay. The primary focus of the workshop will be on water quality and 5 of the 10 Guidelines for Shoreline Living.
- **Oil Spill Workshop:** February 25, at Padilla Bay Research Reserve, 1:00pm – 5:00pm.

The meeting adjourned at 10:40 a.m. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, January 8, 2015, at the Skagit County Administration Building (1800 Continental Place) in Mount Vernon.