



# SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

*Minutes of the January 11, 2018, Skagit County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) meeting, held at the Skagit County Administration Building in Mount Vernon*

## Attendees:

- **MRC Members Attending:** Jay Lind, Paul Dinnel, Betsy Stevenson, Julie Barber, Jamey Selleck, Morty Cohen, Tracy Alker, Sarah Tchang, Phyllis Bravinder, Nathan Biletznikoff, Suzanne Shull (Jude Apple's alternate); Pete Haase; Lynne Jordon
- **MRC Members Absent:** Matt Reynolds, Todd Woodard, Jude Apple
- **Others Attending:** Rachel Best (Morty's MRC Alternate); Michael See, SCPW; Doug Stark, Whatcom MRC; Shane Sullivan, WSDOT; Gabe Ng, WSDOT; Chad Calhoun, WSDOT; Erica Bleke, WDNR; Jack Hartt, Citizen

**Call to Order and Introduction:** Jamey Selleck called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and opened the meeting with introductions. Jamey announced that Amy Carey's Sound Action presentation was canceled due to another scheduling conflict. We are working with Amy to try to reschedule the presentation for another time.

**Approval of Minutes:** December 14, 2017, MRC meeting minutes were approved as written.

## Public Comments:

- Whatcom MRC member Doug Stark, provided a brief summary of the work that Whatcom MRC is doing including: working with Paul Dinnel to help re-establish native oyster beds in Chuckanut Bay, working to establish a volunteer program similar to the Salish Sea Stewards, working with school groups to help with projects on the beach, and participating in some of the pre-restoration monitoring at the Lummi Island rock quarry.
- Michael See suggested the MRC consider presenting to the Board of County Commissioners sometime soon to get them up to speed on the important work the MRC is doing.

## **Sharpes Corner Project Update:** *WSDOT Engineering Design Team*

### Project Goals:

- The Washington State Department of Transportation's (WSDOT) Sharpes Corner roundabout project aims to increase safety and decrease congestion. For more information:  
<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/SR20/SharpesCornerInterchange/default.htm>.

### Project Timeline:

- WSDOT has a contract with Tapani Inc. to do the construction which is scheduled to start in April, 2018. Construction will occur 24 hours (days and nights) in order to get it complete before the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday.
- The utility companies will begin the utility relocations at the intersection sometime next week.
- The next open house is scheduled in Anacortes on January 23.

### Environmental Impacts:

- This project will provide stormwater treatments where there currently are none, so the pollutant load to Fidalgo Bay will be less than existing conditions.
- The WSDOT Design Team said that their project design exceeds the requirements of the [Hydraulics Manual](#) guidelines and the [Highway Runoff Manual](#) (HRM) to treat stormwater runoff. Their Best Management Practices (BMPs) will treat about 3.5 times the area that they are required to treat.
- The roundabout will also help reduce stormwater pollutants because the traffic will no longer be sitting there idling and releasing heavy metals like it currently does with the traffic light.
- There will be very limited earth moving work.
- The project will not alter the existing drainage patterns.
- Inspectors will be onsite every step of the way during construction to make sure the work is being done properly and the permit requirements are being met.

### Best Management Practices:

- The Compost Amended Vegetated Filter Strip (CAVFS) is an enhanced BMP that will be used throughout this project. The carefully blended compost medium increases the storage time and filtration characteristics for removing pollutants. The CAVFS provide a more concentrated treatment in a smaller footprint than some other BMPs. Test results show that CAVFS filter 91% of the pollutants from stormwater during a very heavy rain event. During a light rain event they would likely remove 100% of the pollutants. The lifespan of the CAVFS ranges from approximately 20-50 years (longer than the asphalt).
- In addition to the CAVFS, they will also have landscaping and planting areas that will continue to increase the treatment beyond the CAVFS.
- The CAVFS and landscaping will be maintained by WSDOT's Maintenance Department as part of their agreement with Ecology.

#### **Monitoring:**

- The WSDOT Design Team said that monitoring will occur during construction, but there are no plans to do any long-term monitoring. They pointed out that the BMPs have already been researched, tested, and vetted and approved by the WA Department of Ecology so they are confident that they will work properly. After MRC members expressed concern over the lack of long-term monitoring, WSDOT agreed to take the MRC's questions and concerns about monitoring back to WSDOT's Environmental Manager.
- Paul suggested that oysters might be a good option for testing for pollutants before and after construction to see how well the CAVFS are working. It would be similar to the WA Department of Fish and Wildlife's (WDFW's) Mussel Watch program. Paul noted that the native oysters appear to be doing quite well in that area of Fidalgo Bay which likely indicates the water quality probably isn't too bad right now. Morty recommended contacting WA Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) to see if they could conduct a water quality study as part of their Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve program. Erin said she would follow up with WDNR.

#### **Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Report:** *Jamey Selleck*

- Rich Childers Resignation: Rich Childers recently announced his resignation as the Director of the Northwest Straits Commission, effective January 15. The NWSC is moving forward to find a new Director. Terry Stevens put together the job posting and submitted it to the Department of Ecology. Jamey will be serving on the Election Committee, which is one of the reasons why he will not be able to serve a second term as MRC Chair. The hiring process will likely take a couple of months.
- Northwest Straits Commission and Northwest Straits Foundation Joint Retreat: March 1-2, 2018 at Padilla Bay. The major topic will be strategic planning.
- Salmon Net Pen Educational Forum: The discussion about a net pen educational forum has been shelved for now.
- NWSI 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary: 2018 is the 20th year anniversary of the Northwest Straits Initiative. Please contact Sasha to share ideas to celebrate and showcase our work.
- Next NWSC Meeting: The next Commission meeting will be held Friday, January 26, 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. at the Snohomish County Campus in the Skykomish Conference Room.

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

- New Director of Philanthropy: The NWSF hired a new Director of Philanthropy, Tarrell Kullaway, who just started this month.
  - Skagit Restoration Initiative (SRI) Funds: The SRI funds are administered through the Northwest Straits Foundation under the guidance of the Skagit MRC subcommittee. The SRI Subcommittee recently met to decide what to do with the remaining SRI fund balance of approximately \$29,000. The original SRI budget was \$500,000 which we were able to stretch by implementing a 1:1 match. So in the end, we will have achieved close to a million dollars-worth of work. The Subcommittee made the recommendation to the NWSF Board to spend the remaining SRI funds on the following projects, which the Board approved:
    - **Water Quality Testing**: \$10,000 will be awarded to Skagit Land Trust to help support a water quality study in the streams at the Carlsen/Graber property that flow into Fidalgo Bay as part of the larger Fidalgo Bay Shoreline Protection and Restoration project. The house at the site has already been removed.
    - **Nearshore Monitoring**: \$12,000 will be used to support the continued long-term nearshore restoration and status/trends monitoring in Fidalgo Bay (including data analysis, final monitoring report, and inclusion of data in Sound IQ).
    - **Native Oyster Restoration**: \$5,000 will be allotted for native oyster restoration in Fidalgo and Padilla Bays.
- The remaining funds will be used to cover administrative costs.

- **NFWF Grant Award:** The NWSF received a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) to boost the protection and recovery of Chinook salmon that are key prey for killer whales in this region. The Foundation will be hiring three interns to help with this project. Each County MRC will also likely be involved in this project. Nate announced that Shell Puget Sound Refinery is also contributing funding for the NFWF Five Star & Urban Waters Restoration Program. The [2018 Request for Proposals](#) was recently released. Proposals are due January 31, 2018. Awards range from \$20k to \$50k.
- **Next NWSF Board Meeting:** February 15, 2018.

### MRC Officer Elections

- **MRC Chair:** MRC members voted unanimously in favor of electing Paul Dinnel to serve as Chair for at least one term. There were no objections.
- **MRC Vice-Chair:** MRC members voted unanimously in favor of electing Sarah Tchang to serve as Vice-Chair for a second term. There were no objections.
- **NWSC Representative:** MRC members voted unanimously in favor of electing Jamey Selleck to serve another term as the NWSC Representative for the Skagit MRC. There were no objections.
- **NWSC Alternate:** MRC members voted unanimously in favor of electing Nate Biletnikoff to serve another term as the NWSC Alternate. There were no objections.

### Project Status & Discussion

- **Salish Sea Stewards- *Morty Cohen*:**
  - **Volunteer Program Coordinator/Contractor Status:** We are currently in the process of seeking a firm or an individual contractor to administer the Salish Sea Stewards training and coordination this year. A Request for Quotes and Qualifications (RFQQ) was sent to all of the Environmental Education and Outreach Consultants registered on the County's MRSC Roster. We also sent it to several other individuals and firms that have experience doing this type of work. It was also posted on the Skagit MRC website the CVP website and Facebook page and the Friends of Skagit Beaches website. Due to the lack of response, we ended up reposting the RFQQ and extending the deadline until next Tuesday. Morty asked MRC members to please widely share the RFQQ with anyone who might be interested. Tracy noted that one of the contracting requirements with the County is that the firm or individual must have a business license and insurance. The nine member Salish Sea Stewards subcommittee has been tasked with evaluating/ranking the proposals and selecting the contractor. The Subcommittee consists of six MRC members (Tracy, Morty, Phyllis, Pete, Jay and Rachel) and three Friends of Skagit Beaches Board members (Betty Carteret, Jen Heron, and Gina). If no proposals are received by the deadline, the subcommittee members will have to start looking at other options, including the possibility of having volunteers run the training program this year.
  - **2018 Training Schedule/Planning:** It is anticipated that training will begin March 20<sup>th</sup> rather than March 6<sup>th</sup> as originally planned. We hope to firm up some dates next week. Classes will be held Tuesdays from 1:00pm to 5:00pm at Padilla Bay. The facility has already been reserved. We will start contacting speakers soon. Several MRC members will be asked to be presenters. There are already 26 people on the list to receive an application for this year's training. No decisions have been made yet regarding a cap on the class size.
  - **Volunteer Communications:** Subcommittee members are keeping the current roster of volunteers informed through the electronic news bulletin "The Wave". To get information posted on "The Wave", send an email to: [Salishseastewards@gmail.com](mailto:Salishseastewards@gmail.com). The Project Leaders are also maintaining regular contact with the volunteers that are helping with specific projects like beach seining and forage fish surveys. However, there is a gap with the overall volunteer coordination.
  - **Long-term Planning:** We are currently seeking partners to help support a long-term program and share resources to hire a Volunteer Program Coordinator. The Subcommittee has already met with several potential partner organizations, but nobody is able to hire a Volunteer Program Coordinator at this time.
- **Bowman Bay Nearshore Restoration- *Jay Lind*:** Jay reported that the site is really starting to take shape. The dune grass appears to be taking hold and is looking really good. The next beach seining at Bowman Bay is scheduled to take place Friday, January 24<sup>th</sup>. We will be contracting with the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group to continue plant maintenance and possibly have another planting sometime this spring.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day- *Pete Haase*:** We could not get the August 8<sup>th</sup> date that we really wanted for Fidalgo Bay Day this year, so the event date has been changed to September 15<sup>th</sup>. Pete distributed Save the Date cards to MRC members and will be distributing them at the Storming the Sound event in La Conner. The Fidalgo Bay Resort facility has been reserved and the Shannon Point Marine Center's touch tank will be available for our event this year. The tides will

also work out well for the beach seining demonstration. Pete contacted all of the leads that play key roles. He will also be reaching out to MRC members for help as well.

- Kids on the Beach Pilot Project- *Pete Haase*: Mira Lutz with One Ocean Environmental was the contractor selected to develop and implement the Kids on the Beach pilot project. We are working on getting a contract agreement in place.
- Olympia Oyster Restoration- *Paul Dinnel*: Monitoring will begin again in April. Paul recently participated in a native oyster restoration planning workshop that took place at the Shannon Point Marine center. Paul will also be providing a seminar on Olympia oyster restoration for the students at the Shannon Point Marine Center next week.
- Pinto Abalone Recovery- *Paul Dinnel*: The San Juan County MRC is now a partner in the pinto abalone recovery effort. Paul will be participating in an all-day pinto abalone recovery planning meeting down at the Manchester Lab next month. Monitoring will start up again in February. It is anticipated that an additional 1,000 juvenile pinto abalone will be outplanted at the restoration sites in Skagit County in 2018.
- Forage Fish Index Site Surveys- *Pete Haase*: Monthly surveys continue at Skagit MRC's three Forage Fish Index sites: Ship Harbor, Similk Bay on the Swinomish Reservation, and Samish Island. Surf smelt eggs have been detected at all three of our sites this year. The samples and data are sent to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife for analysis. The WA Department of Natural Resources will be hosting a Microscopic Analysis Training at Padilla Bay later this month for the Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve volunteers. If there is enough space, volunteers involved in the forage fish index site surveys will be able to participate in the training as well.
- Kayak Kelp Recovery- *Suzanne Shull*: Suzanne Shull has been compiling the kelp survey data collected from all of the MRC survey site locations and placing it into maps. The online maps are also linked to 1870's T-sheet kelp delineations: <https://arcg.is/0POmCC>. Here is the link to the online map of Skagit surveys: <https://arcg.is/8TOBg>. Suzanne is also preparing a presentation on the NWS kelp survey data for the upcoming Salish Sea EcoSystem Conference this year. Nicole Jordan will be hosting the NWSI poster highlighting the kelp surveys at the upcoming Sound Waters University event in Island County in February [www.soundwaterstewards.org/sw/2018/](http://www.soundwaterstewards.org/sw/2018/). Suzanne is working with Helen Berry to put all of the data and information collected so far into one place. Helen and Tom Mumford recently published a paper on kelp in Puget Sound using WWI era maps in partnership with University of Chicago's Cathy Pfister: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1365-2745.12908/full>. Here is a link to a recent article <https://news.uchicago.edu/article/2017/12/21/world-war-i-era-maps-help-track-history-kelp-forests-pacific-northwest>.

#### Miscellaneous Events and Announcements:

- WSDOT Sharpes Corner Project: Open House- January 23, 5:30pm to 7:30pm at the Anacortes Middle School (2202 M. Avenue, Anacortes).

**The meeting adjourned at 11:07 a.m. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, February 8, 2018, at the Fidalgo Bay Resort (4701 Fidalgo Bay Rd, Anacortes)**



# SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

*Minutes of the February 08, 2018, Skagit County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) meeting, held at the Fidalgo Bay Resort in Anacortes*

## Attendees:

- **MRC Members Attending:** Jay Lind, Paul Dinnel, Julie Barber, Jamey Selleck, Tracy Alker, Sarah Tchang, Nathan Biletnikoff, Suzanne Shull (Jude Apple's alternate); Pete Haase; Lynne Jordan, Todd Woodard
- **MRC Members Absent:** Matt Reynolds, Jude Apple, Betsy Stevenson, Morty Cohen, Phyllis Bravinder
- **Others Attending:** Casey Mclean, SR<sup>3</sup>; Jacqueline Allison, Anacortes American; Gina Johnson, Salish Sea Stewards

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

**Approval of Minutes:** January 11, 2018, MRC meeting minutes were approved as written.

**Public Comments:** Julie Barber shared the sad news of Karen Wolf's untimely death. Karen was killed in a tragic car accident that occurred at the intersection of Josh Wilson/Farm to Market Road. Karen was a GIS Technician with the Skagit River System Cooperative and will be greatly missed. Her death was a huge loss to the scientific community. There is an online petition to install a roundabout at the intersection. A community meeting will be held in Bay View on March 15<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 pm.

## Sealife Response + Rehab + Research (SR<sup>3</sup>): Casey Mclean

Casey Mclean is a licensed veterinary technician with SR<sup>3</sup> ([Sealife Response, Rehab, and Research](#)) and is an active member of the West Coast Marine Mammal Stranding Network and a trained oil spill responder. SR<sup>3</sup> is a newly established local nonprofit dedicated to advancing the health and welfare of marine wildlife in the Pacific Northwest. In addition to responding to and rehabilitating injured marine wildlife, SR<sup>3</sup> does a lot of public education and outreach. They are a highly collaborative organization partnering with many large and small organizations such as NOAA, the University of Washington, NW Indian College, SeaDoc Society, Vancouver Aquarium, etc. Most of their funding comes from private donations and other foundations. They also receive some grant funding for research.

- **SR<sup>3</sup>'s New Rehab and Science Center:** there are currently 32 sealife rehab facilities throughout the US, but there are none in WA or OR. SR<sup>3</sup> will fill that gap by building Washington State's first dedicated marine animal rehabilitation and science center in West Seattle, right next to Salty's Restaurant. They hope to have rehab pools operational by June 2018. The facility will include a laboratory setting to facilitate the study of marine invertebrate diseases such as Sea Star Wasting Disease, and potential interventions to save these animals. They are not currently set up to facilitate the rehab of seabirds, but they hope to be with a full build-out of their new rehab facility.
- **SR<sup>3</sup> Response to Marine Wildlife Strandings and Entanglement:** SR<sup>3</sup> currently has two boats and a mobile wildlife unit equipped with all of the necessary medical equipment to respond quickly to the animals in need.
  - **Marine Mammal Entanglement:** Over 300,000 whales and dolphins die annually from entanglement in marine debris. Disentangling large marine mammals is very dangerous and requires the right set of skills and equipment. Doug Sandilands is SR<sup>3</sup>'s Entanglement Response Specialist with over 20 years of experience in marine mammal entanglement response on the east coast. He has also trained many other responders all across the east and west coasts. SR<sup>3</sup> is working with other groups to get the equipment necessary to disentangle whales and to properly train responders. SR<sup>3</sup> is also doing a lot of public education and outreach to try to get fishermen and other boaters to report entangled whales and to stay with the animal until responders arrive. Too often, boaters will drive away before reporting their observation making it very difficult for the response team to find the entangled whale. SR<sup>3</sup>'s ultimate goal is to get the fishing industry to go rope-less.
  - **Oil Spill Prepared Response:** SR<sup>3</sup> is working with WA Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) on a few grants to be oil spill prepared. Soon they will be able to store the oil spill response equipment at SR<sup>3</sup>'s new facility in West Seattle. [Focus Wildlife](#), located right in Anacortes, is the lead responder to oiled wildlife. They will set up temporary rehab facilities in the case of an emergency. SR<sup>3</sup> will be ready to assist if needed.

- **Marine Animal Injury Response:** The number of sick and injured animals has steadily increased. SR<sup>3</sup> staff responds to a large number of gunshot injuries of marine wildlife in WA and OR. They also deal with a lot of cases of people who take young seal pups home because they think they've been abandoned but don't know how to take care of them properly, so they end up doing more harm than good.
- **Marine Mammal Strandings:** The number of marine animal strandings in the Salish Sea has steadily increased since the 1990s. It is unclear what is causing the whales to become stranded. [The West Coast Marine Mammal Stranding Network](#) is the lead organization in responding to strandings. Stranded marine mammals, dead or alive, should be reported to the West Coast Marine Mammal Stranding Network at 1-866-767-6114. Stranded sea otters should be reported to the Sea Otter Stranding Network at 1-877-326-8837.
- **SR<sup>3</sup> Marine Mammal Research:** SR<sup>3</sup>'s Dr. Holly Fearnbach works with NOAA conducting large whale health research with drones. The drones are flown about 100 feet or more above the animal to collect really high-resolution images of the whales. They can tell if the whales are losing weight, gaining weight, or are pregnant. They can also measure the calves to see how much they are growing and if they are growing at a healthy rate. They can even collect whale blow or "snot" from the blowholes with a drone and petri dish to detect diseases and the overall health of the animal. They are working with other organizations to prepare a medical record for each individual animal to track their health stats over time.
- **Volunteer Opportunities:** to receive updates about SR<sup>3</sup> and their volunteer opportunities, email: [info@sealifeR3.org](mailto:info@sealifeR3.org), or sign up online: <https://www.sealifer3.org/maillinglist-form>. There currently aren't any ongoing volunteer opportunities right now except for public education and outreach and specialty skills such as graphic designers and business managers, etc. But once the hospital is up and running there will be more volunteer opportunities.

#### **MRC Opportunity Fund:** *All*

The Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) is now accepting applications for the MRC Opportunity Funds through February 28, 2018. MRCs are eligible to apply for up to \$10,000 for one or more projects. After discussing several different project ideas, the consensus of the Committee was to apply for funding for the following:

- **\$1,000 - Fidalgo Bay Day General Support (Pete Haase, Project Lead):** \$1,000 would be used to purchase items outside of the scope of MRC's project budget including prizes and other items to support the very popular Discovery Passport Activity in partnership with the Friends of Skagit Beaches. The money would also be used to purchase food items for special guests and volunteers. In past years we had other sources of funding to purchase these items.
- **\$1,000- Fidalgo Bay Day Plastics Display (Pete Haase, Project Lead):** \$1,000 would be used for a professional creation of a plastics-in-marine waters display and educational materials in partnership with the Friends of Skagit Beaches and the Washington Zero Waste group. The display and educational materials would be used as part of Fidalgo Bay Day as well as other events and activities.

(Pete said that he will need to confirm the above proposal ideas with Friends of Skagit Beaches before applying for funding)

- **\$2,000? - Video Camera/Video Services for Salish Sea Stewards Training (Jay Lind, Project Lead):** Jay said that a video of the classes would be helpful for volunteers who miss a class and to help with future training. In addition, the video camera could also be used for other MRC events, projects, and activities as well. Jay will research the cost and feasibility of purchasing a video camera and/or contracting with someone to record and edit the Salish Sea Stewards classes. Additional memory and an external hard drive to store the videos would also need to be purchased.

The Committee also discussed the following project ideas, but decided not to move forward with seeking MRC Opportunity funds for any of these at this time:

- **Fidalgo Bay Water Quality Study:** The Committee discussed the possibility of applying for MRC Opportunity Funds to conduct a water quality study in Fidalgo Bay to test for contaminants pre- and post-construction of WSDOT's Sharpe's Corner roundabout project. The results would help determine how well WSDOT's Best Management Practices are working to protect the water quality in Fidalgo Bay. Todd said that the Samish would be willing to collect the samples if the MRC wanted to apply for funding to cover the lab costs. The Committee decided that a water quality study wasn't really worth pursuing because the results from the 2007-2009 water quality study indicated that the water quality was already in pretty good shape and would likely only improve with the implementation of WSDOT's Best Management Practices.
- **West March's Point Water Quality Study:** The Committee briefly discussed the idea of conducting a water quality study on the west side of March's Point to test contaminants in the waters near the Washington State Department of Health's (DOH) Shellfish Growing Area. DOH closed the Shellfish Harvest area in 2016 due to concerns over fecal

coliform, but no testing has been done for heavy metals or other contaminants. However, there was not enough interest from MRC members to pursue this project at this time.

- Educational Video: Island County MRC is seeking other MRCs who might be interested in applying for the MRC Opportunity Fund to work with Florian Graner to produce a 30-minute educational video similar to “[Discover the Olympic Coast](#)”. The video would be adapted for our region to share with schools (K-5<sup>th</sup> grade students) and would include an accompanying curricular activity on marine food webs that NOAA developed that aligns with existing curricular standards. Skagit MRC members decided that there wouldn’t be enough time to contact the schools to see if this would even be a possibility. An MRC Project Lead would also need to be assigned to carry out this project, but there wasn’t enough interest at this time.

#### **Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Report:** *Jamey Selleck*

- New NWSC Director Search: Rich Childers recently resigned as the Director of the Northwest Straits Commission. The NWSC is now in search of a new Director. The job announcement has been posted with the Department of Ecology. Jamey will be serving on the Election Committee. The hiring process will likely take at least three weeks. Interviews will likely take place in March.
- Northwest Straits Commission and Northwest Straits Foundation Joint Retreat: March 1-2, 2018 in La Conner. The major topic will be strategic planning.
- Our Coast Community Film Series: The Snohomish MRC presented on their “Our Coast Community Film Series”. The film series consisted of three ocean-themed films, engaging local schools, and the promotion of the [MyCoast App](#). The MyCoast App can be used to document tides, storm damage, beach cleanups, and other shoreline changes over time.
- Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program (ESRP): Jay Krienitz, WA Department of Fish and Wildlife presented on the ESRP small grants program to support smaller projects to involve the MRCs. A Request for Proposals will be sent out in mid-February. Jay offered to present the program to each of the MRCs.
- Electric Boat Propulsion in the Salish Sea: Ken Carrasco, San Juan MRC representative, presented on electric marine propulsion.
- NWSI 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and MRC Conference: 2018 is the 20th year anniversary of the Northwest Straits Initiative. Please contact Sasha to share ideas for showcasing our work or to get involved in planning the MRC Conference at [horst@nwstraits.org](mailto:horst@nwstraits.org). The conference is scheduled for November 16 - 17, 2018 in Port Townsend.
- Puget Sound Partnership Near-Term Actions: The final NTA proposals are due by March 30, 2018. The Northwest Straits Foundation submitted several regional NTAs and is requesting letters of support from the MRCs.
- Next NWSC Meeting: The next Commission meeting will be held Friday, February 23 via a WebEx conference call.

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

- New Director of Philanthropy: The Foundation’s new Director of Philanthropy, Tarrell Kullaway, just started in January. If you have any suggestions regarding potential donors, MRC Conference sponsors or ideas for fundraising, please contact Tarrell at [Kullaway@nwstraitsfoundation.org](mailto:Kullaway@nwstraitsfoundation.org).
- Media Coverage: Jay said that he has been in touch with the La Conner News about publishing stories about the Northwest Straits Initiative and the work of the MRC.
- Next NWSF Board Meeting: February 15, 2018.

#### **MRC Administrative Report** *Tracy Alker*

- Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference – April 4-6: The NWSC is offering to cover the registration fees for the conference for one MRC representative from each MRC. Preference will be given to session chairs and presenters of MRC work. The Commission cannot cover travel or lodging, but there is some funding in the MRC budget to do that. MRC members were asked to let Tracy know if they would like financial assistance for the conference before February 14<sup>th</sup>. The conference will be held in Seattle from April 4-6, 2018. For more information about the conference, check out the conference website: <http://www.wvu.edu/salishseaconference/>.
- Northwest Straits Foundation Letters of Support for Near-Term Action Proposals: Tracy asked the Skagit MRC members if they would be in favor of providing a letter of support for the Northwest Straits Foundation’s Regional Near-Term Action proposals including:
  - Shoreline Armor Reduction and Prevention Program
  - Shoreline Restoration Effectiveness Monitoring
  - Similk Bay Shoreline Armor Removal Project

The consensus of the Committee was to provide letters of support for each of the proposals listed above.

- 2018-2019 MRC Grant Project Ideas: Tracy reminded the Committee that we need to start thinking about project ideas for the next MRC grant that will begin October 1, 2018 – September 30, 2019. This is the MRC's base funding that the NWSC seeks for us through the EPA/PSP. It is anticipated that the grant amount will be similar to our current grant (\$70k to \$74k). We will likely be asked to present one of our project proposals at the April NWSC meeting. The Northwest Straits Foundation is also available to help us apply for additional funding if needed. MRC members were reminded that it is also a good idea to be thinking about potential projects that might fit other sources of funding.

## Project Status & Discussion

- Salish Sea Stewards- Gina Johnson & Tracy Alker:
  - **Volunteer Program Coordinator/Contractor Status**: After widely distributing the Request for Quotes and Qualifications (RFQQ) and extending the deadline several times, we finally received proposals from two well-qualified firms, Veda Environmental and Natural Resources Consultants, Inc. (NRC). The nine-member Salish Sea Stewards subcommittee evaluated and ranked the proposals. Joan Drinkwin with Natural Resources Consultants, Inc. was selected for the contract. The subcommittee felt that Joan would be a huge benefit to the Salish Sea Stewards program because she has a lot of experience in planning and facilitating educational workshops and volunteer training and coordination and she was also the former Interim Director for the Northwest Straits Foundation for several years and worked with the Skagit MRC on many projects. Joan has already hit the ground running with the Salish Sea Stewards training program. Jamey noted that because he also works for NRC, he had to recuse himself and was not involved in any of the decision making processes regarding the contractor selection for this project.
  - **Planning**: Training is scheduled to begin March 20 through May 22. Classes will be held Tuesdays from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. at Padilla Bay. One of the training dates will be Wednesday, April 18 in collaboration with the Snohomish WSU Beach Watchers training. The class will be held at Padilla Bay and the topic will be Climate Change and Ocean Acidification. The Subcommittee recently had a meeting with Joan to discuss potential training topics and speakers. Joan started contacting speakers for this year's training. So far 17 volunteers have applied to take the training. Joan will be completing background checks on all of the volunteers.
  - **Promotion**: The media has been contacted about the training and posters have been widely distributed. There was a recent article in the Skagit Valley Herald about the upcoming training. The training announcement was also posted on the Salish Sea Stewards Facebook page, the MRC website and "The Wave" along with a link to the application. Applications are due March 2, 2018.
- Bowman Bay Nearshore Restoration- Jay Lind: Lisa Kaufman is coordinating with the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group to continue plant maintenance and possibly have another planting sometime this spring/summer. Paul noted that while they were beach seining at Bowman Bay last Tuesday they ran into a school of juvenile surf smelt as well as a juvenile pink salmon near the restoration area. The next beach seining at Bowman Bay is scheduled to take place Friday, February 23.
- Fidalgo Bay Day- Pete Haase: Fidalgo Bay Day will be held September 15 this year at the Fidalgo Bay Resort. Pete distributed a bunch of Save the Date cards at the Storming the Sound event in La Conner. Pete contacted all of the leads that play key roles as well as the organizations that bring displays. The City of Anacortes sent a letter that said we will not be able to hang the street banner this year. Apparently, the street banner is in pretty bad shape and is becoming a safety hazard and needs to be replaced. Lynne suggested advertising the event on the John L Scott Reader Board. Lynne also suggested contacting the Skagit STEM Network to see if they might be interested in participating this year.
- Kids on the Beach Pilot Project- Pete Haase: The Request for Quotes and Qualifications (RFQQ) was widely distributed, but only one proposal was received from a highly qualified firm. Mira Lutz with One Ocean Environmental was the contractor selected to develop and implement the Kids on the Beach pilot project. The goal is to provide valuable learning experiences for local middle-school students by providing opportunities for them to use scientific procedures in the classroom and on the beach. Mira has already started reaching out to the local schools to participate in the program. It is anticipated that the contract will be signed soon.
- Olympia Oyster Restoration- Paul Dinnel: Paul has been working with a group of students at Western Washington University (WWU) who are interested in monitoring oysters in Chuckanut Bay this year. He has also been working with students who are writing a story for the WWU newspaper about native oyster restoration. The data analysis from last year's monitoring efforts will be finalized soon.
- Pinto Abalone Recovery- Paul Dinnel: A pinto abalone recovery planning meeting was held yesterday at the Manchester Lab. The pinto abalone recovery team plans to put together a manuscript on the pinto abalone recovery

efforts over the last ten years. The San Juan County MRC will be a partner in the pinto abalone recovery effort this year. Monitoring will start up again soon. It is anticipated that an additional 1,000 juvenile pinto abalone will be outplanted at the restoration sites in Skagit County this year. Paul plans to go out in the field with the crew during some of the monitoring and outplanting excursions.

- Forage Fish Index Site Surveys- Pete Haase: Monthly surveys continue at Skagit MRC's three Forage Fish Index sites: Ship Harbor, Similk Bay on the Swinomish Reservation, and Samish Island. Samples are sent to WDFW for processing and analysis. There was a microscopic analysis training that was recently held for volunteers at Padilla Bay. Around 18 volunteers from Skagit and Whatcom Counties participated in the training. The intent is to eventually have a few well-trained volunteers take the lead on the microscopic analyses.
- Kayak Kelp Recovery- Suzanne Shull: Suzanne Shull has been working with Helen Berry to analyze the kelp data that all of the MRCs have collected. At this point, they are just looking at changes in the kelp beds over time between 2015 and 2017 as well as looking at changes in the kelp beds throughout the season. They will also be looking at temperature data to see if there are any patterns. To do this, the survey sites will be grouped into regions. For Skagit, the Coffin Rocks survey site at Deception Pass could potentially be grouped into two different regions. Suzanne requested feedback from the MRC members on where they think it should be grouped. The Shannon Point kelp survey site can't really be grouped into a region with any other survey sites at this time. Suzanne suggested that it might be interesting to see what is happening with this kelp bed relative to the kelp beds in the San Juans. Todd noted that Samish is re-digitizing aerial photography of kelp beds and will make the data available to others who are interested. Lucas is planning a kelp recovery team workshop on March 20 in Seattle.

#### Miscellaneous Events and Announcements:

- Taste of Padilla Bay with a Hint of Hawaii- August 11, 2018. This fundraiser event hosted by the Padilla Bay Foundation is another seafood extravaganza with a Hawaiian flare featuring a new Estuarine Research Reserve on Oahu. The money raised will be dedicated to children's education.

**The meeting adjourned at 10:55 a.m. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, March 8, 2018, at the Skagit County Administration Building (1800 Continental Place, Mount Vernon)**



# SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

*Minutes of the March 08, 2018, Skagit County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) meeting, held at the Skagit County Administration Building (1800 Continental Place, Mount Vernon)*

## Attendees:

- **MRC Members Attending:** Jay Lind, Paul Dinnel, Jamey Selleck, Tracy Alker, Sarah Tchang, Nathan Biletnikoff, Pete Haase, Lynne Jordan, Jude Apple, Betsy Stevenson, Morty Cohen, Phyllis Bravinder
- **MRC Members Absent:** Matt Reynolds, Todd Woodard, Julie Barber
- **Others Attending:** Anthony Young, City of Anacortes Council

**Call to Order and Introduction:** Paul Dinnel called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. and opened the meeting with introductions.

**Approval of Minutes:** February 8, 2018, MRC meeting minutes were approved as written.

**Public Comments:** None.

## MRC Opportunity Fund Update: All

The Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF) extended the application deadline for the MRC Opportunity Funds to April 30, 2018. The original deadline was February 28, 2018. MRCs are eligible to apply for up to \$10,000 for one or more projects. MRCs can submit multiple proposals. The application(s) should be for something the MRC really wants to do and can't fund otherwise. The intent is to support opportunities as they arise. There is no 'use it or lose it' policy. Any of the funds that aren't spent this year will be made available to the MRCs next year.

- **(\$2,000) Fidalgo Bay Day Support Proposal:** Per consensus of the MRC, Pete Haase submitted a proposal requesting \$2,000 for Fidalgo Bay Day. The money would be used to purchase items that the MRC Grant cannot cover such as prizes for the very popular Discovery Passport Activity, food items for special guests and volunteers, and for a professional creation of a plastics-in-marine waters display and educational materials in partnership with the Friends of Skagit Beaches.
- **(\$0) Video Camera/Video Recording Services of Salish Sea Stewards Training:** Caroline indicated that purchasing equipment such as a video camera to record the Salish Sea Stewards training would not rank very high with reviewers. Jay received a cost estimate of around \$8,000 to contract with someone to do the recording, editing, and posting online. However, after discussing this idea with the Foundation, it was determined that this probably wouldn't rank very high either, so Jay decided not to submit a proposal. Jay said that he hopes to recruit some volunteers to record the training using Tracy's video camera.
- **(\$8,000) Salish Sea Stewards Retreat and MRC Retreat:** The Committee discussed other potential ideas for the remaining \$8,000 of MRC Opportunity Funds. After a really great discussion, the consensus of the Committee was to apply for funding to support a retreat for the Salish Sea Stewards. The money would be used to hire a facilitator, rent a facility, and catering. The retreat will help bring together all of the volunteers (new and old) to do a needs assessment, give a status report on the program and volunteer activities, re-energize the volunteers, and to show our appreciation. The primary goal of the retreat will be to work on developing a new model for the volunteer program that would be mostly self-driven by volunteers rather than by paid a volunteer coordinator. This will help to reduce the costs for a more sustainable program. The Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) is strongly encouraging each MRC to have a retreat this year in honor of the 20 Anniversary of the NWSI, so Jamey suggested that we also consider applying for MRC Opportunity funds to help cover the costs of our MRC retreat. The MRC discussed combining the two retreats into one proposal, but decided that it would be better to do two separate proposals instead. Jude offered to prepare the first draft of the retreat proposals and Morty and Phyllis will review and finalize the application for submittal.

- New NWSC Director Search: The NWSC is working to hire a new Director. They received a lot of great applicants. The hiring committee will likely start conducting interviews sometime in the next week or two. There will likely be two rounds of interviews.
- NWSC and NWS Foundation Joint Retreat (March 1-2, 2018 in La Conner): The major topics included strategic planning, the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative (NWSI), and the annual MRC Conference in November. There were lots of opportunities at the retreat to break out into small groups for more in-depth conversations. A committee was formed to start planning the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of the NWSI and the MRC Conference. Senator Patty Murray, one of the original founders of the NWSI, will likely be invited to the Conference to help celebrate. They also talked about organizing site visits with legislators and local elected officials to share and celebrate some of the work the MRCs are doing in each County.
- Next NWSC Meeting: The next Commission meeting will be held Friday, March 30, 2018, via a WebEx conference call.

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

- NWSF New Director of Philanthropy: The Foundation's new Director of Philanthropy, Tarrell Kullaway, will start making the rounds to the different MRCs soon.
- Derelict Crab Pot Removal: The NWSF has funding to remove derelict crab pots from the Guemes Channel this summer. Jay said that he would like to look into putting together an educational video about the derelict crab pot removal using a drone. Anthony Young suggested contacting the Anacortes High School film students. Jude said they do really great work and are always looking for new projects and he knows just the right person to contact. Pete suggested also contacting the local media to do a story on the derelict crab pot removal.

#### **MRC Administrative Report: *Tracy Alker***

- MRC Grant Reports Due – April 10: Quarterly progress reports and the 2017 Annual Report are due April 10<sup>th</sup>. MRC members were asked to submit their volunteer hours for the quarterly report and photos for the annual report.
- Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference Registration Assistance: The NWSC has offered to provide financial assistance with the registration fees for MRC representation at the Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference this year. The conference will be held in Seattle from April 4-6, 2018. Phyllis Bravinder was the only Skagit MRC member who expressed interest, so she has been selected to receive the free registration.
- Southern Resident Killer Whale Protection: San Juan County is seeking collaboration from MRCs to widely distribute standardized 'diver-down' type whale flags to local and visiting boaters and the whale watching fleet to hoist when whales are spotted in the area. No financial obligations would be required.

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

- Salish Sea Stewards- *Morty Cohen*: The application deadline for volunteers has been extended until March 9, 2018. Applications can be downloaded from the MRC website: [www.skagitmrc.org](http://www.skagitmrc.org). So far, 28 people have signed up to take the training which is scheduled to begin March 20 through May 22. Classes will mostly be held Tuesdays from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. at Padilla Bay. The draft curriculum was circulated to MRC members and the speaker schedule will be available on the Skagit MRC website. The curriculum is very similar to last year with just a few minor changes. MRC members and past volunteers are all invited to attend the classes. Nan McKay and Caroline Gibson are scheduled to talk on the first day of class and will provide an overview of the history of Puget Sound protection and the role of the Northwest Straits Initiative and citizen science. Morty will provide an overview of the MRC and Salish Sea Stewards program. This year we will be focusing on connecting volunteers with different volunteer opportunities during each class and through "The Wave" and Facebook. There will be minimal volunteer coordination this year due to the limited budget. Instead, we will be asking volunteers to help with more of the coordination. For instance, one of our volunteers, Rachel Best, is now in charge of sending out the electronic news bulletin "The Wave" and updating the Salish Sea Stewards Facebook page. She is also helping to track volunteer hours in Volgisitics which is owned and maintained by the Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (PBNERR). We don't currently have a website for the Salish Sea Stewards. There has been some discussion about transforming the former Coastal Volunteer Partnership website into a one-stop-shop for volunteers to go to find different volunteer opportunities and other related activities in our community. The website is owned by PBNERR but it has not been kept up to date. The Salish Sea Stewards long-term planning committee is starting to explore options for the 2019 training and longer-term solutions for the program. The person/s facilitating the 2019 training could be different than the person/s doing the volunteer coordination. If limited volunteer coordination works well this year, it might be something to consider as a longer-term solution to cut down on costs. MRC members discussed the idea of providing additional leadership skills

training to the volunteers, similar to the Washington Trail Association program. If volunteers have this type of training they might be more open to taking on more leadership roles.

- Bowman Bay Nearshore Restoration- Jay Lind: The nearshore restoration plantings appear to be doing well. Skagit MRC has funding available to continue the plant maintenance in collaboration with the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group this spring and summer. Nearshore monitoring continues. Beach seining at Bowman Bay took place Wednesday, March 7. The next beach seining is scheduled for March 28, 2018, at 9:30 a.m.
- Fidalgo Bay Day- Pete Haase: Fidalgo Bay Day will be held September 15 this year at the Fidalgo Bay Resort. Pete distributed a bunch of Save the Date cards and has more available if anyone needs some. We've started doing some advertising. All of the leads and participating organizations have been contacted. Many have confirmed that they will be there.
- Kids on the Beach Pilot Project- Pete Haase: We contracted with Mira Lutz, One Ocean Environmental, to develop this pilot project. Two schools (4 classes, 100 students) have confirmed that they are on board and excited to participate in this pilot project: Conway, 8th grade and Mt. Baker in Mt. Vernon, 8th grade. Mira had a meeting with the teachers from both schools to refine the different project components. The students will be introduced to designing a research project, field research techniques, and data analysis. One research aspect will be forage fish spawning success in Fidalgo Bay. The students will be working in teams. A science symposium will be held for the students to present their research.
- Olympia Oyster Restoration- Paul Dinnel: Volunteers will be recruited to help with the annual monitoring sometime in April during low tide. Paul will be working with Puget Sound Restoration Fund this summer to put out additional oyster shell on the east side of Fidalgo Bay and Weaverling Spit in collaboration with the Samish Tribe. Paul will also be working with Brady Blake, a shellfish biologist with the WA Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), to transfer oysters over to the east side of March's Point to try to establish a reproductive oyster plot. Paul pointed out that we have \$5,000 from the Skagit Restoration Initiative Funds for Olympia oyster restoration. Paul is considering using the funds to produce and distribute oyster seed and shell in Padilla Bay with the help of volunteers in the next year or so. Jude noted that one of his Colleagues at the Elkhorn Slough Estuarine Research Reserve is applying for the annual Science Collaborative funds to develop an Olympia Oyster West Coast Network. He also mentioned that there is going to be an Olympia oyster work session at the National Shellfish Association Conference in Seattle later this month.
- Pinto Abalone Recovery- Paul Dinnel: The Puget Sound Restoration Fund and the WDFW crews started conducting surveys this month. Paul is considering doing a joint proposal with San Juan MRC for pinto abalone recovery this coming year.
- Forage Fish Index Site Surveys- Pete Haase: Monthly surveys continue at Skagit MRC's three forage fish index sites: Ship Harbor, Similk Bay on the Swinomish Reservation, and Samish Island. Samples are all sent to the WA Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) for processing and analysis. A conference call with WDFW was held yesterday for all of the MRC leads involved in the forage fish surveys. Phil Dionne, a fisheries biologist with WDFW, reaffirmed that these index site surveys are meant to be long-term and encouraged MRCs to keep these surveys going as long as they can. The long-term data is important for comparison to future restoration sites, future development sites, and adjacent sites. Pete said that there are a couple of new sites that he and his crew are considering adding to the index site surveys. Jamey pointed out that WDFW staff used to conduct most of the statewide forage fish index site surveys, but now the surveys are mostly being done by trained volunteers. Pete said they have at least 10 dedicated volunteers who always show up to help with the surveys no matter what the weather is doing. The WA Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) recently bought a microscope for the volunteers to use for egg identification, staging, and analysis. There are currently 8 or 9 trained volunteers who really enjoy doing the microscope work, including a Salish Sea Steward who spent most of his career working with microscopes.
- Kayak Kelp Surveys and Recovery- Phyllis Bravinder: The first Puget Sound Kelp Recovery Plan Workshop will be held in Seattle on March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2018 (tentatively scheduled 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.) and will be made available for others to attend via WebEx. Lucas Hart has taken the lead in coordinating this collaborative effort and has been working with several other partners since October 2017 to begin outlining the recovery plan. The workshop will include presentations on recovery plan goals, kelp status and trends, habitat impacts, tribal perspectives, mapping projects and salmon-kelp and rockfish interactions. Jamey noted that the data collected so far seems to indicate that large patches of kelp beds have been disappearing over the last 50 years. The possible reasons why the kelp is disappearing will be discussed at the kelp workshop. Jamey said that he will be attending the workshop and can give a report at the next MRC meeting. Pete pointed out that Lucas will be presenting on kelp as part of the Salish Sea Stewards training in hopes to recruit volunteers to help with the kayak kelp surveys.

The Request for Proposals (RFP) has not been officially released yet, but will be soon. The total budget will be around \$74,000, same as last year. Grant applications are due **May 22, 2018**. The MRC Grant start date is October 1, 2018, through September 30, 2019. The Committee briefly reviewed the following projects that are being proposed by MRC members for the 2018-2019 MRC Grant funding:

- **\$24,500 - MRC Operations:** *This budget cannot be reduced. Funding is used for staff support, meeting refreshments, MRC display and outreach material updates, and travel for MRC members for meetings, trainings, conferences and workshops.*
- **\$3,500 - Fidalgo Bay Day:** *This budget can potentially be reduced. It is primarily used for event promotion and advertisement and miscellaneous supplies. We will need a new project lead.*
- **\$20,500 - Salish Sea Stewards:** *We are waiting to receive cost estimates from a couple of different organizations for the training and coordination in 2019. With limited volunteer coordination, this budget could be reduced.*
- **\$10,000 - Kids on the Beach:** *The original budget for this project was \$5,500, but needs to be increased in order to help expand the program and cover the costs of contracting with someone and bussing the students to the beach.*
- **\$20,000 - Pinto Abalone Recovery:** *Paul is working in collaboration with the Puget Sound Restoration Fund to define the scope of work for 2019 and get cost estimates for the work that needs to be done.*
- **\$500 - Forage Fish Survey Equipment:** *Pete said that the volunteers conducting the forage fish surveys might be in need of another GPS unit/and or a microscope.*

The above list of projects is for consideration only and has not yet been approved by the Committee. The Committee will need to make sure these projects fit the criteria in the RFP and priorities of the MRC and NWSC. In addition, the total proposed project budget is \$5,000 over the total MRC grant amount. The MRC will need to determine where the budget can be reduced and if other funding sources can be used to help cover the costs. Project proposals and budget will need to be approved by the MRC at the May 10 MRC meeting.

- **MRC Project Proposal Presentation to NWSC – June 29, 2018:** Morty volunteered to present the Salish Sea Stewards proposal at the NWSC meeting in June.
- **Non-MRC Grant Funded Projects:** The MRC projects that don't require any funding or are funded through sources other than the MRC Grant will be included in the MRC's Annual Workplan and master project spreadsheet, but will not be included in the 2018-2019 MRC Grant proposal spreadsheet or 2018-2019 MRC Grant application. Tracy will provide a copy of the master project spreadsheet and Annual Workplan prior to the next MRC meeting.

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

- **Taste of Padilla Bay with a Hint of Hawaii- August 11, 2018.** This fundraiser event hosted by the Padilla Bay Foundation is another seafood extravaganza with a Hawaiian flare featuring a new Estuarine Research Reserve on Oahu. The money raised will be dedicated to children's education.
- **Mount Vernon High School Science Night- April 26, 2018 (5:30-8:00pm):** Betsy Stevenson will be hosting the MRC display/activity. Betsy invited other MRC members to help out if interested.
- **Kelly's Point and Yellow Bluff Protection:** Lynne Jordan shared the wonderful news that the Skagit Land Trust was able to raise enough money through a federal grant and donations from over 450 donors to purchase the 27-acre property (3000 feet of shoreline) on the southwest corner of Guemes Island for protection. The Conservation Fund provided a loan to help purchase the property until the grant funds become available. Yellow Bluff's cliffs are termed "feeder bluff exceptional" because of the amount of sediment and valuable habitat they contribute to nearby shorelines.
- **FOSB Lecture Series- March 16, 2018 (7:00pm):** The Friends of Skagit Beaches will hold its next lecture on Friday, March 16, at 7:00pm at the NW Educational Services District Building in Anacortes. Dr. Bert Webber will be presenting "The Salish Sea: Where it is, How it Works, Who uses it, and What it Means. Lectures are free and open to the public. For more information, go to: [www.skagitbeaches.org](http://www.skagitbeaches.org).
- **Billy Frank Jr. Pacific Salmon Summit- March 19, 2018:** The Salmon Defense is hosting the Billy Frank Jr. Pacific Salmon Summit on Monday, March 19, 2018 from 8:00am to 8:00pm at the Tulalip Resort Casino. Registration is free but you must RSVP [salmondefense.org/pss/register](http://salmondefense.org/pss/register) to reserve your spot. It will be open to the first 300 people. The purpose of the summit is to bring together a broad group of stakeholders to assess the salmon situation and share ideas about how to continue to restore and protect salmon and salmon habitat.
- **Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program (ESRP) Grant Competition is Open:** Pre-proposals are due April 12. Full proposals due July 18. This year, they are offering multiple grants for project sponsors: Restoration and Protection Grants, a Small Grants, Learning, and a streamlined Portfolio Project process for both learning and restoration

projects. All these projects are reviewed and ranked in order to create one single integrated ESRP investment plan. For more information, please visit [http://www.pugetsoundnearshore.org/esrp/application\\_materials.html](http://www.pugetsoundnearshore.org/esrp/application_materials.html).

- Forage Fish and Food Webs/Nearshore workgroups Meeting at Padilla Bay- March 28, 2018 (12:00pm -3:00pm) Lucas Hart will be presenting on the Kelp Recovery Plan. Meetings are open to the public.
- Maritime Blue 2050 Initiative: Governor Jay Inslee recently launched a new [Maritime Blue 2050 Initiative](https://www.maritimefederation.com/about-wa-maritime-blue.html). The program aims to protect the marine environment, expand innovative technology, and create jobs for a sustainable maritime industry by 2050: <https://www.maritimefederation.com/about-wa-maritime-blue.html>. Hopefully, we will be hearing more about it soon.
- Shell Puget Sound Refinery Update: Nate shared that Shell has been working on developing a CO2 reduction plan for the refinery and is working to make the refinery safer inside and out. They are looking at making things at the refinery more energy efficient, incorporating electrification of their vehicles, and installing solar panels in some of their new buildings in the future. Shell recently applied for a permit for a new crude oil tank to help offload the ships more quickly so the ships would spend less time in the water off of March's Point. It is not Shell's intent to ship more crude oil in or out. The crude would be offloaded and refined on site. They also recently applied for a permit for upgrading gasoline and removing sulfur. Nate said that he would be happy to talk more about the proposed projects with anyone who is interested. Pete and Anthony thanked Nate for keeping everyone informed.

**The meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, April 12, 2018, at the Fidalgo Bay Resort in Anacortes (4701 Fidalgo Bay Rd)**



# SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

*Minutes of the April 12, 2018, Skagit County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) meeting, held at the Fidalgo Bay Resort in Anacortes (4701 Fidalgo Bay Rd)*

## Attendees:

- **MRC Members Attending:** Jay Lind, Jamey Selleck, Tracy Alker, Sarah Tchang, Nathan Biletznikoff, Pete Haase, Lynne Jordan, Jude Apple, Betsy Stevenson, Morty Cohen, Phyllis Bravinder, Julie Barber, Jodi Bluhm (Todd's alternate)
- **MRC Members Absent:** Matt Reynolds, Todd Woodard, Paul Dinnel
- **Others Attending:** Gina Johnson, Salish Sea Stewards; Rachel Best (Morty's Alternate); Wayne Huseby, FOSB & FBARCE; Michael Kirshenbaum, Skagit Land Trust; Kari Odden, Skagit Land Trust

**Call to Order and Introduction:** Sarah Tchang called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m. and opened the meeting with introductions.

**Approval of Minutes:** March 8, 2018, MRC meeting minutes were approved as written.

**Public Comments:** None.

## ESRP Grant Proposals: Michael Kirshenbaum and Kari Odden, Skagit Land Trust

Kari Odden and Michael Kirshenbaum presented Skagit Land Trust's (SLT) proposal to apply for \$150,000 for the Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program (ESRP) Small Grant for the acquisition and protection of the shoreline portion of a 37.7 acre property on Samish Island as part of a larger project. Pre-proposals are due April 12. Full proposals are due July 18. The property is currently on the market so SLT is in the process of negotiating with the landowner while they try to raise the funds. The entire property was listed last year for \$1.5 million. The 10 acre shoreline portion of the property contains coastal wetlands and a dike. There are a lot of potential opportunities for wetland enhancement including partial dike removal to open up the tidal flow. The upland portion of the property is also considered to be very valuable habitat. The uplands consist of mature forest and important raptor habitat. It was home to the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest great blue heron colony (around 350 nests) until it was recently abandoned just last year. But there is hope that they will come back. Eagles are also very common in that area. SLT will seek other funding for the upland protection. The landowners would like to retain one building on the upland site. SLT is considering creating a conservation easement for the shoreline protection. Jude said that this is the type of project that Padilla Bay NERR might be interested in partnering on. Because this project appears to meet the goals of the MRC, the consensus of the Committee was to support SLT's ESRP Small Grant proposal. However, Betsy Stevenson had to recuse herself from the MRC's decision in order to avoid any potential conflicts of interest, just in case she has to review any future permits for this project.

SLT is also considering applying for the larger ESRP grant for \$980,000 dollars to help pay off the loan for their recent acquisition of Kellys Point on Guemes Island. SLT had originally applied for and ranked really high for the federal Coastal Wetlands Grant for the acquisition of Kellys Point, but federal funding for acquisition projects have been put on hold for now. This ESRP grant application will be a backup, just in case the Coastal Wetlands Grant doesn't come through. The property, which consists of 27 acres with 232 ft of marine shoreline including an iconic feeder bluff and a beautiful upland forest, ranked as a high priority in the shoreline protection analysis that the Skagit Land Trust did in partnership with the Skagit MRC several years ago. 2/3 of the feeder bluffs on this property are considered to be feeder bluff exceptional. These bluffs help feed sediment to the other beaches on Guemes Island through the two drift cells which will help with long-term climate change impacts. The property offers public access to a long stretch of beach, great for bird watching and agate hunting. SLT also plans to install interpretive signage about feeder bluffs and habitat protection. Pete commented that this property might also offer a great opportunity to help educate Salish Sea Stewards or school groups about the importance of feeder bluffs, climate change, and habitat protection. SLT requested a letter of support for this proposal from the Skagit MRC. The consensus of the Committee was to provide a letter of support for SLT's ESRP grant application for Kellys Point. There were no objections.

## Water Quality Testing Update at the Fidalgo Bay Property: Michael Kirshenbaum, Skagit Land Trust

The Skagit Land Trust (SLT) owns two conservation areas on the west side of Fidalgo Bay: the Carstens property on the shoreline of Fidalgo Bay and the Graber property, upslope from the Carstens property and across SR20. There are two small unnamed streams that run across both of these properties into Fidalgo Bay via culverts on the Carstens property. In addition, there is an artificial pond created by a small dam on one of the streams. There is very little information on the water quality of the streams and the role of this dam/pond structure and its impact on water quality is also unknown. Per recommendation of the MRC 's Skagit Restoration Initiative (SRI) subcommittee, SLT was granted \$10,000 of SRI funding from the NWSF to do a water quality study for one year in support of stewardship, restoration, and protection of Fidalgo Bay. SLT partnered with the Samish Indian Nation to collect monthly samples from the artificial pond, the two creeks and the two outfalls. They are testing for Fecal coliform, temperature, turbidity and other measures consistent with long-term monitoring protocols for Fidalgo Bay. They just started collecting samples last month. If results show that the dam pond structure is degrading the water quality, they will conduct a feasibility study for dam removal and riparian restoration. After the water quality study is completed, SLT plans to conduct outreach with neighboring landowners. They will send out a mailing to residences that educates about the Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve and water quality inputs and impacts. They will also conduct a field tour for residents that focuses on water quality, the Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve, and protected lands.

#### **Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Report:** *Jamey Selleck*

- **New NWSC Director:** Lucas Hart was recently hired as the new NWSC Director. As Lucas transitions into his new role, he will also be really busy juggling the duties of his previous position as the NWSC Marine Program Manager until that position is filled.
- **Salish Sea Ecosystems Conference Recap:** This year's transboundary conference was the biggest one ever. Governor Jay Inslee was one of the speakers at the conference. There was a great tribal presence. There were 14 concurrent sessions. It was difficult to pick which sessions to attend because there were so many great ones being offered. Each talk was 15 minutes long. There has been some discussion about possibly limiting the number of speakers and sessions, or extending the conference one extra day which would also increase the cost of the conference. There were some complaints that the program wasn't available online, it was only provided via a smart-phone app.
- **Next NWSC Meeting:** The next Commission meeting will be held Friday, April 27, 2018 11am-3:45pm at Friday Harbor.

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

The NWSF didn't have a meeting last month. Jay reminded everyone that the derelict crab pots in the Guemes Channel will be pulled in June. Jason Morgan will be leading this effort.

#### **MRC Administrative Report:** *Tracy Alker*

- **MRC Grant Reports:** Quarterly progress reports and the 2017 Annual Report were due April 10<sup>th</sup>. Tracy thanked the MRC members for sending in their volunteer hours and project updates. Tracy is still working on the 2017 Annual Report but hopes to have it finished soon.
- **MRC Opportunity Funds for the MRC Retreat:** Per consensus, the Committee decided not to apply for MRC Opportunity funds for the MRC retreat this year. Committee members agreed that we could probably still have the retreat without any funding. We just wouldn't be able to hire a professional facilitator or pay for a facility or food.
- **MRC Membership Discussion:** With the increased interest in MRC membership, it was suggested that this would be a good topic for discussion at our next MRC meeting. It is important that we maintain a well-balanced representation of diverse interest groups and that the members are active participants. We currently have 15 voting MRC members. There is nothing in our MRC Bylaws that sets a maximum number of MRC members. The question about limiting the number of MRC members has been brought up in the past, but no official decisions were ever made.

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

- **Salish Sea Stewards- *Morty Cohen*:** Training started on March 20 and will run through May 22, 2018 at Padilla Bay. 30 people signed up to take the training, but 4 ended up dropping out for various reasons. Classes are going really well. Joan has done an excellent job running the program this year. We've gotten a lot of great feedback from the class participants. Darla Gay, a new Salish Sea Steward from this year's class and a Snohomish County Beach Watcher, will be joining the Salish Sea Stewards Planning Committee. She recently moved to Guemes Island and has a lot of experience in figuring out how to keep the WSU Beach Watchers program going in Snohomish County. She will be a really great addition to the team. Pete shared an article that was recently in the Anacortes American about volunteers participating in the Mussel Watch Program in Skagit County. Tom Flanagan, a Salish Sea Steward from last year's class was quoted in the paper and gave the Salish Sea Stewards program props.

Morty announced that he plans to resign from the MRC in June, but still plans to be involved in volunteering. MRC members thanked Morty for everything he has done for the program. Morty recommended that Rachel Best take over his role as the MRC Project Lead for the Salish Sea Stewards program. Rachel is currently Morty's MRC Alternate, but will be submitting an application to become an MRC member soon. Morty will be working with Rachel as co-project lead through June. Morty and Rachel are currently working on the Salish Sea Stewards proposal for the MRC Grant.

Morty thanked Jude for doing such an excellent job drafting the application for the MRC Opportunity Funds for the Salish Sea Stewards Retreat. The Salish Sea Stewards Planning Committee reviewed the application and made some comments. Jude said he will make the changes based on the comments and send the final application to Rachel for submittal to the NWSF. The application is due April 30<sup>th</sup>.

- Bowman Bay Nearshore Restoration- Jay Lind: The Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group (SFEG) will be hosting a planting party for a large group of 4<sup>th</sup> graders on Friday, April 13<sup>th</sup>. The plants, mostly dune grass and coastal strawberry, were provided by SFEG. The kids will get an opportunity to help with the beach seining and forage fish surveys. The County is working on a contract with the SFEG with MRC Grant funds to lead the monthly plant maintenance activities at the Bowman Bay restoration site this year which will mainly consist of weeding and watering with the help of volunteers. Jamey said that the Puget Sound Partnership Leadership Council will be meeting in Anacortes in September. As part of that meeting, the NWSC is considering organizing a field trip to the Bowman Bay restoration site or to the San Juans in September to showcase our work.
- Fidalgo Bay Day- Pete Haase: Fidalgo Bay Day will be held Saturday, September 15, 2018 at the Fidalgo Bay Resort. Early event promotion has been initiated. Save the Date cards have been distributed. Event leads and organizations have been contacted and many have already confirmed that they will be participating this year. We are still waiting to hear back from the Northwest Straits Foundation to find out whether or not the application for the MRC opportunity Funds got approved for the Discovery Passport activity and the plastics display for Fidalgo Bay Day this year.
- Kids on the Beach Pilot Project- Pete Haase: Mira Lutz with One Ocean Environmental has been contracted to develop and implement the Kids on the Beach Pilot Project this year. Mira has been doing a wonderful job connecting with the schools and students and getting this pilot program up and running in a really short time frame. 50 Conway middle school students are participating in the program. Mount Baker Middle School was originally planning to participate as well, but ended up having to cancel due to too many scheduling conflicts. Kari said that she has some great contacts at the schools and could help reach out to them next year to participate in this program. The Conway students will be learning how to design a research project, field research techniques, and data analysis. The students will be working in teams and each team will be developing research proposals. Their field work activities will take place on April 18<sup>th</sup> at the Fidalgo Bay Resort. The students will learn beach seining and forage fish survey techniques, how to record data in their journals, and how to look for eggs under the microscope. Pete and Jason were able to find lots of volunteers to help out with this event. It is anticipated that the press will be there to do a story for the paper. The students will take the data back to the classroom for experiments and analysis. A science symposium will be held for the students to present their research on May 11 at the Fidalgo Bay Resort.
- Olympia Oyster Restoration: Volunteers will be recruited to help with the annual monitoring sometime this spring during low tide. Additional oyster shell will be distributed on the east side of Fidalgo Bay and Weaverling Spit in collaboration with the Puget Sound Restoration Fund and the Samish Tribe to try to establish a reproductive oyster plot in that location.
- Pinto Abalone Recovery: The field work is now complete. The data will be analyzed and a final report will be generated before the end of September.
- Forage Fish Index Site Surveys- Pete Haase: Monthly surveys continue at Skagit MRC's three Forage Fish Index sites: Ship Harbor, Similk Bay on the Swinomish Reservation, and Samish Island. The samples and data are sent to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife for analysis. There was another conference call a couple of weeks ago. Pete noted that the person at WDFW who does the lab analysis and generates the reports took another job. In addition, Lucas Hart, the forage fish index site lead for the NWSC, will be stepping down from that role now that he is the new NWSC Director. It is unclear how this might impact the forage fish index site sampling and analysis and the overall program for the long-term.
- Kayak Kelp Surveys - Phyllis Bravinder: An MRC kelp monitoring WebEx meeting will be held May 9<sup>th</sup>. The Salish Sea Stewards training will cover the topic of kelp and kelp monitoring this year. Phyllis attended part of the Kelp Recovery Workshop via the WebEx.

The Kelp Recovery Plan development will be a two year process. It primarily stemmed from the critical habitat needs for Endangered Species Act (ESA) listed rockfish because kelp is a habitat requirement for rockfish. It also provides important habitat for salmon. The Kelp Recovery Plan will take a very broad ecosystem approach. The first of a series of Kelp Recovery Plan Workshops was held in Seattle on March 20<sup>th</sup>, and was made available for others to attend via WebEx. Around 30 people attended the workshop in Seattle and around 30 more participated via WebEx. The workshop included presentations on recovery plan goals, kelp status and trends, habitat impacts, tribal perspectives, mapping projects and salmon-kelp and rockfish interactions. There were talks from experts from California, Washington, and B.C. The talks were focused on historical data, satellite imagery, work that is being done and monitoring gaps. The next Kelp Recovery Workshop will be held in June. Jamey said that the Puget Sound Restoration Fund is currently growing kelp in the Manchester lab and is working on outplanting the kelp. Researchers are also looking at areas that have experienced kelp bed loss to analyze the extent of the loss, sediment composition and predator-prey interactions and their correlation to kelp bed loss.

### **2018-2019 MRC Grant Project Proposal Discussion**

The Request for Proposals (RFP) was recently sent out to MRC members. The total MRC Grant award will be around \$75,000. Grant applications are due **May 22, 2018**. The MRC Grant start date is October 1, 2018, through September 30, 2019. Rachel agreed to take Morty's place to present the Salish Sea Stewards proposal at the NWSC meeting in Island County on June 29. The Committee discussed the following projects that are being proposed by MRC members for the 2018-2019 MRC Grant funding. Bowman Bay Restoration planting was added to the list of project proposals. In order to move forward with all of the projects being proposed and to stay within the total budget, the Committee decided to reduce the budget of each project by at least \$600. Some project budgets were reduced by even more. Tracy will be meeting with Sasha and Lucas on April 24<sup>th</sup> to discuss the MRC Grant project proposals. Final decisions regarding the project proposals and budget will need to be approved by the MRC at the May 10 MRC meeting:

- **\$23,900 - MRC Operations:** The original budget requested amount was for \$24,500. The budget was reduced to \$23,900. Funding is used for staff support, meeting refreshments, MRC display and outreach material updates, and travel for MRC members for meetings, trainings, conferences and workshops.
- **\$1,900 - Fidalgo Bay Day:** The original budget request amount was \$3,500. The budget was reduced to \$1,900. This funding is for event promotion and advertisement and miscellaneous supplies. We will need a new project lead.
- **\$19,900 - Salish Sea Stewards:** The original budget request for this project \$20,500. It was reduced to \$19,900
- **\$8,900 - Kids on the Beach:** The original budget request for this project was \$10,000, but was reduced to \$8,900
- **\$18,000 - Pinto Abalone Recovery:** The original budget request for this project was \$20,000, but was reduced to 18,000.
- **\$2,400 – Bowman Bay Planting:** The original budget request for this project was \$3,000, but was reduced to \$2,400.

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

- **New Swinomish Shellfish Farm:** Julie announced that the Swinomish Tribe just hired a new shellfish farmer, Stewart Thomas to build and manage a new shellfish farm for the Swinomish. Stewart worked at Taylor Shellfish for about ten years. The sustainable shellfish farm is going to be located just south of the Swinomish Golf Course on the Swinomish owned portion of the beach.
- **Swinomish Juvenile Crab Study:** The Swinomish Tribe received two grants for a crab study. Traps consisting of a floating 5 gallon plastic jug with a light to attract crab megalopa will be set at several locations including: Rosario Bay, Cornet Bay, Washington Park, Bowman Bay, and possibly Skyline. The traps will float at the surface and will be tethered to public docks and piers. Volunteers will be recruited to help check the traps daily.
- **"Environmental History of Skagit County" Presented by Teresa Trebin - April 14, 2018:** The lecture is sponsored by the Skagit County Historical Museum and will be held 2pm to 4pm at the historical Skagit City School. The cost is \$5 for adults and \$4 for senior citizens. Lectures are free to museum members.
- **Skagit Conservation District Native Plant Sale- April 14, 2018:** 9am to 1pm at the Plant Materials Center, 16564 Bradley Road. Most of the plants are sold as bareroot seedlings.
- **"Getting to Know NOAA", Presented by Polly Hicks- April 20, 2018:** The lecture series is sponsored by the Friends of Skagit Beaches. Lectures are held at the NW Education District Building in Anacortes. Lectures are free and start at 7pm. There is limited room, so get there early! There will be demonstrations of the KidWind Challenge in the lobby. It is the ultimate wind turbine design competition for students.
- **Transition Fidalgo & Friends Future Fest- April 21 and April 22:** at the Port Transit Shed Event Center in Anacortes. On Sunday April 22, there will be a workshop that focuses on citizen science. Different organizations, including the Skagit MRC, have been invited to share information about citizen science opportunities. Pete Haase volunteered to share information about the Skagit MRC and our volunteer opportunities.

- Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group Earth Day Event at Edgewater Park- April 21: Pete Haase and Susan George will be hosting a table for the Skagit MRC and the Northwest Straits Initiative. The display will focus on crabber outreach and will include crabbing tips to prevent lost crab pots, the escape cord quiz and crab pot rigging demonstration.
- Skagit Land Trust's (SLT) Earth Day Celebration at the Utopia Conservation Area- April 22: SLT, in partnership with Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group and Puget Sound Energy will be hosting a volunteer work party from 1pm to 4pm at the Utopia Conservation to plant trees and shrubs. There will also be some fun activities for kids of all ages.
- Mount Vernon High School Science Night- April 26, 2018. Betsy Stevenson will be hosting Skagit MRCs display.
- "Orcas in Puget Sound" Presented by Sue Madsen- May 5, 2018: The lecture is sponsored by the Skagit County Historical Museum and will be held 2pm to 4pm at the historical Skagit City School. The cost is \$5 for adults and \$4 for senior citizens. Lectures are free to museum members.
- Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve Open House- May 19<sup>th</sup>: The public open house will be held at the NW Education District Building in Anacortes on May 19<sup>th</sup> from 9am to 3pm. The open house will include educational posters, displays, activities, and short talks. Paul Dinnel will be presenting on Olympia oyster restoration in Fidalgo Bay.

**The meeting adjourned at 11:05 a.m. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, May 10, 2018, at the Skagit County Administration Building (1800 Continental Place, Mount Vernon)**



# SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

*Minutes of the May 10, 2018, Skagit County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) meeting, held at the Skagit County Administration Building (1800 Continental Place, Mount Vernon)*

## Attendees:

- **MRC Members Attending:** Jay Lind, Jamey Selleck, Paul Dinnel, Tracy Alker, Sarah Tchang, Pete Haase, Lynne Jordan, Jude Apple, Betsy Stevenson, Morty Cohen, Phyllis Bravinder, Julie Barber, Todd Woodard
- **MRC Members Absent:** Matt Reynolds, Nathan Biletnikoff
- **Others Attending:** Gina Johnson, Salish Sea Stewards; Rachel Best (Morty's Alternate); Dan van Hees, NWSC

**Call to Order and Introduction:** Paul Dinnel called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. and opened the meeting with introductions. Paul thanked Sarah Tchang for Chairing the MRC meeting last month in his absence.

**Approval of Minutes:** April 12, 2018, MRC meeting minutes were approved as written.

**Public Comments:** None.

## **Measuring Our Impact – Net Ecosystem Improvement Project:** *Dan van Hees, Northwest Straits Commission*

The Net Ecosystem Improvement (NEI) is a project of the Northwest Straits Initiative (NWSI) to help evaluate and quantify the effectiveness of our work using science based evidence. The basic NEI model calculates the change in function per unit area times the area protected or restored. It will be used as a communications tool to show how our actions impact the broader ecosystem. MRC actions that impact a change in our shorelines, a change in behavior, or a change in policy can all be evaluated. The Committee discussed how evaluating and communicating the human element or connection in our work will help appeal to a broader base. Jude noted that Jamie Donatuto, the social scientist for the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community, has several publications that link ecosystems with human dimensions and how ecological changes impact human well-being. Jamie's publications can be found on [Researchgate](#) as well as the [Swinomish peer-reviewed publications webpage](#).

Dan van Hees was recently hired by the Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) to work with the MRCs over the next six months to identify one or two candidate projects that can be used to develop conceptual and qualitative models to help illustrate the connection between citizen science based recovery and protection actions and effects on ecosystem functions and services. The models will also be used to generate guidelines for future project development and an understanding of where we can expand our efforts. Dan said that he could also help facilitate publishing the work of the MRC in scientific journals if that is something we are interested in. The Committee discussed the Weaverling Spit, Bowman Bay, and Olympia oyster restoration projects as possible candidates. Dan plans to develop a couple of quantitative and visual communication tools starting with the eelgrass restoration model.

## **Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Report:** *Jamey Selleck*

- **New NWSC Director, Chair, and Vice Chair:** The Commission welcomed Dr. Lucas Hart as the new director at the NWSC meeting last month in Friday Harbor. Lucas's former position as the Marine Program Manager will likely get posted soon. Elections were held for the NWSC Chair and Vice-Chair positions. Paul Clappitt of the Snohomish MRC replaced Nan McKay as the new NWSC Chair and Alan Clark of the Clallam MRC replaced Jamey Selleck as Vice Chair. Nan and Jamey served as the NWSC Chair and Vice Chair for the last two years, the maximum term limit per NWSC Bylaws.
- **Presentations:** Kendra Smith presented "The History of Southern Resident Killer Whales in San Juan County" and Frances Robertson presented on San Juan MRC's project to improve boater education around the whales.
- **The Washington Blue Ribbon Panel on Ocean Acidification Report Update:** The 2017 Addendum to the Ocean Acidification Report identifying strategies for combatting ocean acidification is now available online: [http://oainwa.org/assets/docs/2017\\_Addendum\\_BR\\_P\\_Report\\_fullreport.pdf](http://oainwa.org/assets/docs/2017_Addendum_BR_P_Report_fullreport.pdf). A briefing will be held via WebEx on May 22. This addendum expands upon the original 2012 report which established a comprehensive strategy for how to address ocean acidification in Washington.
- **Monthly MRC Reports:** Monthly reports for each MRC are available at this link: <https://bit.ly/2JMCWzX>.
- **Next NWSC Meeting:** The next Commission meeting will be held Friday, May 25 from 10am-12:00pm over WebEx.

## NWSC Representative/Alternate Election

Jamey announced that after serving as the NWSC Representative for the Skagit MRC for the last three years, he will be stepping down from that role. Although the maximum term limit for the NWSC Representative is two years, the Committee decided to make an exception so that Jamey could serve out his term as NWSC Vice-Chair. Jamey noted that it takes close to two years just for the NWSC Representatives to get a really good understanding of what the NWSC is all about and what their role is. He suggested the MRC consider increasing the maximum term limit. The Committee discussed some of the duties, expectations, and time commitment of the NWSC Representative. The NWSC Representative is responsible for attending the monthly NWSC meetings to update the Commission on the progress of the Skagit MRC activities and vote on behalf of the Skagit MRC on issues discussed at NWSC meetings. The NWSC meetings rotate from WebEx meetings to in-person meetings in different Counties. The NWSC Representative also reports back to the MRC members at the MRC monthly meetings on the topics discussed at the latest NWSC meeting.

- Action: MRC members voted unanimously to elect Nate Biletnikoff, currently serving as the NWSC Alternate, as the new NWSC Representative and Jude Apple as the NWSC Alternate. There were no objections. Jamey said that he could fill in as needed.

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

- MRC Opportunity Fund: The Foundation awarded several MRC grants through the Opportunity Fund including Skagit MRCs Plastics Display and the Discovery Passport Activity for Fidalgo Bay Day. Skagit MRC's proposal for the Salish Sea Stewards retreat is currently under review.
- Communications Internship: A new communications internship is now available. This intern will focus on coordination and promotion of MRC work that supports the recovery of Southern Resident Killer Whales.
- Boeing Grant Opportunity: The NWSF was invited to apply for \$50k Boeing Grant for MRC stormwater management projects in Snohomish, Island, and Skagit Counties. Some of the potential project ideas that were discussed included rain gardens and other Low Impact Development projects, outreach, educational workshops, interpretive signage, etc. Lynne Jordan pointed out that there is a new [Opportunity Zone](#) designation for several communities in Skagit County that provides federal tax incentives for business and development in low-income areas, including an area just south of Commercial Avenue in Anacortes. With the tax incentives, there could be a great opportunity to incorporate LID projects in some of the Opportunity Zone designated areas.
- GiveBIG Campaign: Terrell worked on the GiveBIG Campaign to help raise funds for the Foundation and MRCs. They received a \$10,000 match from a private donor. The campaign ended on May 9<sup>th</sup>.
- Derelict Crab Pot Removal: Jason Morgan will be leading the effort to remove derelict crab pots in the Guemes Channel later this month to early June. Komo 4 News and the Skagit Valley Herald will be covering the story.
- Kukatali Reserve Restoration Project: The Northwest Straits Foundation is providing some grant funding that was left over from the Shannon Point Restoration project to support the Kukatali Reserve Restoration project. Construction on the tombolo will begin in July. Volunteers will help with some of the pre-construction monitoring in June including beach wrack, large woody debris, and forage fish surveys. Monitoring will continue after construction is complete.

## MRC Administrative Report: *Tracy Alker*

- 2017 MRC Annual Report: The 2017 MRC Annual Report is now complete and has been distributed to MRC members. It will also be posted on the MRC website and shared with the Board of County Commissioners.
- Joint MRC Meeting: Island and Whatcom MRC expressed interest in having a joint meeting with Skagit MRC in July. Tracy requested feedback regarding potential dates, times, location, agenda items, etc.

## Project Status & Discussion

- Salish Sea Stewards- *Morty Cohen*: There are two weeks left of classes. The last class will be held May 22, 2018 at Padilla Bay and will be followed by a potluck. MRC members are encouraged to attend to show their support. 30 people originally signed up to take the training, but several ended up dropping out for various reasons. Classes are going really well. Joan has done an excellent job running the program this year. Class participants will be asked to complete an evaluation of the entire training program at the end of the last class. The MRC's goal of linking volunteers with volunteer opportunities has been working out really well. Rachel applied for the MRC Opportunity Funds for the Salish Sea Stewards Retreat on April 30th. We are still waiting to hear back whether or not it will get funded. The Salish Sea Stewards Planning Subcommittee will be meeting today after the regular MRC meeting. MRC members are welcome to join. A volunteer appreciation picnic sponsored by the Friends of Skagit Beaches will be held at Washington Park in Anacortes on June 12<sup>th</sup> from 11am to 1pm. MRC members are invited.

- **Bowman Bay Nearshore Restoration- Jay Lind:** Nearshore restoration monitoring continues. One of the Salish Sea Stewards classes was held at the Bowman Bay restoration site. The Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group (SFEG) recently hosted a planting party with a school group of around 40 fourth graders. The kids got to check out the beach seining and forage fish surveys that were going on the same day. We will have a contract soon with SFEG to continue working with volunteers throughout this summer to water and weed the plantings at Bowman Bay.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day- Pete Haase:** Fidalgo Bay Day will be held Saturday, September 15, 2018 at the Fidalgo Bay Resort. Early event promotion has been initiated. Save the Date cards have been distributed. Event leads and organizations have been contacted and many have already confirmed that they will be participating this year. We will be receiving MRC Opportunity Funds from the NWS Foundation to support the passport activity discovery stations and the plastics display in partnership with Zero Waste Washington and the Friends of Skagit Beaches.
- **Kids on the Beach Pilot Project- Pete Haase:** Mira Lutz with One Ocean Environmental has done an excellent job developing and implementing the Kids on the Beach Pilot Project. 50 eighth grade students from Conway Middle School are participating in the program this year. This project taught the eighth graders how to write research proposals, conduct field research, sort through historical data, and perform statistical analysis. The students will be presenting their findings at the Science Symposium this Friday, May 11 at the Fidalgo Bay Resort from 9:30am to noon. There was an excellent article in the Skagit Valley Herald about the program.
- **Olympia Oyster Restoration- Paul Dinnel:** In the next few weeks volunteers will start collecting and monitoring shell bags in Fidalgo Bay and will deploy 20 new shell bags for future monitoring. Paul recently gave a presentation on abalone and native oyster restoration as part of the Salish Sea Stewards training. Paul also created a poster on the Skagit MRC's native oyster restoration work in Fidalgo Bay which he will be presenting at the Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve Open House on May 19<sup>th</sup> at the NW Education District Building in Anacortes from 9am to 3pm.
- **Pinto Abalone Recovery- Paul Dinnel:** The field work is now complete. The data will be analyzed and a final report will be generated before the end of September.
- **Forage Fish Index Site Surveys- Pete Haase:** Monthly surveys continue at Skagit MRC's three Forage Fish Index sites: Ship Harbor, Similk Bay on the Swinomish Reservation, and Samish Island. Volunteers are currently storing their own samples for now until the WA Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) has enough staff available to start doing the Quality Analysis again. There might be an opportunity to add the Kukatali Reserve as a new forage fish index site to survey for long-term monitoring, if approved by WDFW. If not, volunteers will conduct forage fish surveys at this location as part of the restoration project. A forage fish survey training for Northwest Straits Initiative volunteers is tentatively scheduled for June 1 at the Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve. Pete is looking into the possibility of moving the training to the Fidalgo Bay Resort because there will be more opportunity to find forage fish eggs at that location. There are currently 8 or 9 volunteers who get together once or twice a month to sort through samples to look for fish eggs under the microscopes at Padilla Bay.
- **Kayak Kelp Surveys - Phyllis Bravinder:** An MRC kelp monitoring WebEx meeting was held May 9<sup>th</sup>. The next Kelp Recovery Plan workshop and WebEx will be held June 8<sup>th</sup>. Lucas Hart presented on kelp as part of the Salish Sea Stewards training. The kayak kelp surveys are important to help with ground-truthing historical data, and data collected via satellites and aerial photography. Jamey shared that Betsy Peabody with the Puget Sound Restoration Fund was recently interviewed on CBS's 60 Minutes about growing kelp and kelp research: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/seaweed-farming-and-its-surprising-benefits/>. There was also a recent article about their work in the Seattle Time's Pacific Northwest Magazine.

### **2018-2019 MRC Grant Project Proposals/Budget Recommendations**

The Committee voted unanimously to approve the following project proposals and budget for the 2018-2019 MRC Grant. There were no objections. Jamey Selleck abstained from voting to avoid any potential conflicts of interest. The project leads will each prepare the proposals/application for their projects. Tracy will enter everything into EAGL, Ecology's online grant application by the May 22 grant deadline. Grant applications will be reviewed by the NWSC Technical Advisory Committee. Clarification from MRCs may be requested. The MRC Grant start date will be October 1, 2018 – September 30, 2019. The total grant amount is: \$75,000.

- **\$23,900 - MRC Operations (Project Lead: Tracy Alker):** The original budget requested amount was for \$24,500. The budget was reduced to \$23,900. Funding is for staff support, meeting refreshments, MRC display and outreach material updates, and travel for MRC members for NWSC meetings, trainings, conferences and workshops.
- **\$1,900 - Fidalgo Bay Day (Project Lead: Jay Lind):** Jay volunteered to be the Project Lead for Fidalgo Bay Day with support from the Friends of Skagit Beaches and others on the planning team. Pete said he would prepare the project proposal and grant application. He also offered to help provide some guidance to Jay throughout the planning

processes. The original budget request amount was \$3,500. The budget was reduced to \$1,900. This funding is for event promotion and advertisement and miscellaneous supplies.

- **\$19,900 - Salish Sea Stewards (Project Lead: Rachel Best):** The original budget request for this project \$20,500. It was reduced to \$19,900. Funding is primarily for the Volunteer Program Coordinator's time to plan, promote, and facilitate the Salish Sea Stewards training program and provide limited volunteer communications, engagement, and coordination.
- **\$8,900 - Kids on the Beach (Project Lead: Pete Haase):** The original budget request for this project was \$10,000, but was reduced to \$8,900. Funding is primarily for the contractor's time to run the program. It will also be used for field journals and to bus the kids to the beach.
- **\$18,000 - Pinto Abalone Recovery (Project Lead: Jay Lind):** The original budget request for this project was \$20,000, but was reduced to 18,000. Funding is to contract with the Puget Sound Restoration Fund for outplanting, surveys, and hatchery production.
- **\$2,400 - Bowman Bay Planting (Project Lead: Jay Lind):** The original budget request for this project was \$3,000, but was reduced to \$2,400. Funding is to contract with the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group for planting and plant maintenance parties with the help of volunteers.

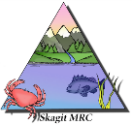
#### **MRC Membership:**

- **MRC Membership Discussion:** The Committee discussed the importance of maintaining a well-balanced representation of diverse interest groups and the need for MRC members to be active participants and willing to be a project lead or serve as an MRC officer or NWSC Representative. We currently have 14 voting MRC members representing all of the various interest groups (marine scientists, local government, tribal, economic, recreational, environmental, and concerned citizens). However, there is nothing in our MRC Bylaws that sets a maximum number of MRC members. The Committee discussed whether or not we should include a maximum limit in our Bylaws. After further discussion, the Committee decided there was really no need to limit the number of MRC members at this time.
- **MRC Membership Application - Rachel Best:** Rachel submitted a MRC membership application to take Morty's place as the Project Lead for the Salish Sea Stewards after he leaves in June. Rachel worked for the WA Department of Ecology Hazardous Waste and Toxic Reduction program for 15 years and is currently serving as Morty Cohen's Alternate on the MRC. In addition, Rachel is a Salish Sea Steward graduate from the class of 2016 and a member of the Salish Sea Stewards Planning Subcommittee. Rachel has taken on the role of updating the Salish Sea Stewards Facebook page, maintaining Volgistics to report and track volunteer hours, and sending out the volunteer news bulletin "The Wave". The Committee voted unanimously to make the recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to appoint Rachel to the MRC. There were no objections.

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

- **Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve Open House- May 19<sup>th</sup>:** The public open house will be held at the NW Education District Building in Anacortes on May 19<sup>th</sup> from 9am to 3pm. The open house will include educational posters, displays, activities, and short talks. Paul Dinnel will be sharing information about Olympia oyster restoration in Fidalgo Bay.
- **2004 Northwest Straits Initiative's Five-Year Evaluation:** Jay suggested MRC members take a look at this report to remember where we were 15 years ago versus where we are now, especially in light of the NWSI's 20 year anniversary. Here is the link to the report: <http://nwstraits.org/media/1257/nwsc-2004-evaluationrpt.pdf>.
- **MyCoast App:** The Snohomish County MRC is currently using the MyCoast App to collect and analyze pictures and data relating to storm events, derelict boats, king tides, and creosote pilings, to help build awareness among decision-makers and stakeholders. Pete shared that the WA Department of Natural Resources is trying to get a state-wide subscription to the [MyCoast App](#) so other groups can use it without having to pay for the high subscription costs. Stay tuned!
- **Nature's Score Card:** Pete shared that the Washington Environmental Council and the Puget Soundkeeper Alliance produced a report that ranked different municipalities for incorporating Low Impact Development (LID) into their municipal codes to manage stormwater runoff. 23 municipalities failed to meet this requirement. The City of Anacortes scored surprisingly low. Here is the link to the report: <https://naturescorecard.com/>. Several Committee members pointed out that the City of Anacortes is currently in the process of updating their code to incorporate LID components.
- **Green Crab Survey Update:** 13 green crabs have already been found in Dungeness Spit this year. Our area is now in high alert.
- **Potential Mitigation Project Opportunity at Padilla Bay:** Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR) has been asked to make recommendations for potential mitigation projects along the Padilla Bay shoreline as part of the permit process for the Rozema Boat Builder's dock expansion. Jude asked MRC members to share any project ideas.

The meeting adjourned at 11:12 a.m. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, June 14, 2018, at the Port of Anacortes



# SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

*Minutes of the June 14, 2018, Skagit County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) meeting, held at the Port of Anacortes*

## Attendees:

- **MRC Members Attending:** Jay Lind, Paul Dinnel, Tracy Alker, Sarah Tchang, Pete Haase, Lynne Jordan, Morty Cohen, Phyllis Bravinder, Nathan Biletnikoff; Rachel Best
- **MRC Members Absent:** Matt Reynolds, Julie Barber, Todd Woodard, Jamey Selleck, Jude Apple, Betsy Stevenson
- **Others Attending:** Gina Johnson, Salish Sea Stewards (Rachel's Alternate); Amy Carey, Sound Action; Jason Morgan, NWSF; Annie Thomas, NWSF; Tarrell Kullaway, NWSF; Darla Gay Smith, Salish Sea Stewards

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

**Approval of Minutes:** May 10, 2018, MRC meeting minutes were approved as written.

**Public Comments:** None.

## **Sound Action:** *Amy Carey*

Sound Action contacted the Skagit MRC to share information about the work they are doing to protect the nearshore habitats in Puget Sound. Amy expressed her appreciation of the work that the MRCs do and said that she would like to see the Northwest Straits Initiative (NWSI) model be expanded to the south Puget Sound area. Sound Action's work as a regulatory watchdog started up in 2013 out of concern for the loss of nearshore habitat, one of the biggest threats to the health of Puget Sound. In Washington State, the Hydraulic Code is the primary law governing nearshore habitat protection. The Hydraulic Code specifically calls for the protection of forage fish spawning areas when considering HPA permit decisions which is why forage fish surveys are so important for documenting forage fish spawning habitat. Projects that involve any in-water work (e.g. construction of docks, bulkheads, marinas, bridges, dredging operation, etc.) require a Hydraulic Project Approval (HPA) permit under the jurisdiction of the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). The main goal of Sound Action is to review each and every one of the shoreline HPA permits to make sure that the regulations are being followed and the best available science is being used in the permit approval process to ensure the protection of the fish and fish habitat in Puget Sound. Sound Action takes an exhaustive approach by researching the scientific data, historical records, making site visits, and working with consultants. They typically review over 500 permits each year. HPA permits can be accessed on WDFW's website under APPS: [www.wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/hpa/](http://www.wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/hpa/). According to Sound Action, almost all of the HPAs get approved, but only around 20% of them actually meet the no net loss of habitat requirement. If Sound Action finds that important science-based information was missing or overlooked and regulations weren't followed for approving a particular permit, they will work with WDFW to address and resolve the issues through an informal appeal process. If the permit still gets approved without appropriate provisions to protect fish and habitat, Sound Action will take legal action through the formal appeal process. To learn more about the work of Sound Action or to join their email list go to:

<https://soundaction.org/>.

## **Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Report:** *Nate Biletnikoff*

- Nate was unable to attend the last NWSC meeting. Instead, he reported on a recent meeting with NOAA and the National Marine Fish and Wildlife Foundation in Sand Point as part of the orca recovery effort. Fisheries biologists from several different agencies discussed the scientific data and opportunities surrounding the prey availability and priority areas for the southern resident killer whales. Kelp recovery, forage fish, and eelgrass are all important components in the recovery effort for southern resident killer whales (SRKW) and are a top priority of the NWSI. This was all done in advance to prepare for the Governor's SRKW Task Force Meeting that will focus on prey availability.
- **Next NWSC Meeting:** The next Commission meeting will be held Friday, June 29 in Coupeville from 9am-3pm. Each MRC will be presenting one of their project proposals for the 2018-2019 MRC Grant. Pete Haase will be presenting the Kids on the Beach project proposal on behalf of the Skagit MRC. MRC members are welcome to attend.

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

- New NWSF Interns: NWSF recently hired two new interns; Dana Oster, Nearshore Restoration Intern, and Annie Thomas, Monitoring/Citizen Science Intern. A new communications internship is now available which will focus on coordination and promotion of MRC work that supports the recovery of Southern Resident Killer Whales.
- Social Media: The NWSF now have their own social media profiles on Facebook (@NWStraitsFND), Twitter (@NWSFoundation) and Instagram (@NWStraitsFND). Please like and invite others to like them!
- Seeking New Board Members: The NWSF Board is seeking candidates with non-profit experience for board membership.
- MRC Opportunity Fund: Skagit MRC's proposal for the Salish Sea Stewards retreat is currently under review. They will make their decision within the next week or two.
- Boeing Grant Opportunity: The NWSF applied for a \$50k Boeing Grant for MRC stormwater management projects in Snohomish, Island, and Skagit Counties. In addition, Boeing will donate \$250 for every 10 hours a current Boeing employee volunteers which the NWSF is eligible to receive.
- Fundraising: Tarrell will continue to work to solicit private localized support for each MRC.
- Derelict Crab Pot Removal: Morty shared an article that was recently in the Anacortes American about the Northwest Straits Foundation's derelict crab pot removal project in the Guemes Channel that recently took place. The Skagit Valley Herald, NPR and Komo 4 News also covered the story. Information can also be found on the Foundation's Derelict Gear Facebook page. 614 derelict crab pots were identified and targeted for removal. However, Jason said that because of the mucky bottom, their operations much slower so they were only able to remove around 450 pots. Some of the pots that could not be removed were disabled so they could no longer trap crabs. Around 80% of the crab pots that were removed in the Guemes Channel were commercial pots, most likely due to vessel traffic and gear conflict. This was unusual because in most cases, the derelict crab pots they have found have been recreational pots. Recreational pots are usually lost due to user error. The NWSF was able to identify and return most of the commercial crab pots back to their owners. The pots that were still in good shape, but had no identification were donated to the local Puget Sound Anglers group to use for fundraising. The pots that were in really bad shape were taken to Skagit River Steel, a salvage yard for recycling. Jason will provide a project report once all of the data is finalized.
- Kukatali Reserve Restoration Project: The Northwest Straits Foundation is providing some grant funding that was left over from the Shannon Point Restoration project to support the Kukatali Reserve Restoration project. Construction on the tombolo will begin in July. Volunteers will help with some of the pre-construction monitoring in June including beach wrack, large woody debris, and forage fish surveys. Monitoring will continue after construction is complete.

#### **MRC Administrative Report: *Tracy Alker***

- Joint MRC Meeting: Island and Whatcom MRC expressed interest in having a joint meeting with Skagit MRC in July. Tracy requested feedback regarding potential dates, times, location, agenda items, etc.
- 2017-2018 MRC Grant Progress Reports- Due July 10: MRC progress reports and volunteer hours are due July 10<sup>th</sup>. All state funds in the current MRC Grant must be spent in the April-June reporting period. Those funds will expire if not used by June 30. Extensions are not possible.
- 2018-2019 MRC Grant Applications: Comments have been received. Tracy is working on the revisions. The MRC Grant will likely be finalized in August. The Grant start date will be October 1, 2018 – September 30, 2019.

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

- Salish Sea Stewards- *Morty Cohen*: The last class was held on May 22, 2018 at Padilla Bay. 26 very enthusiastic new volunteers graduated from the program this year. Class evaluations will be reviewed and results will be considered for developing next year's program. The MRC's goal of linking volunteers with volunteer opportunities has been working out really well. Morty suggested the MRC take a look at volgestics to see how many of the people who take the classes end up volunteering and how long they actually continue to stay engaged. Darla Gay Smith said that happens quite frequently with the WSU Beach Watchers in Snohomish County as well. WSU actually interviews volunteers for the Beach Watchers training program which helps with team building, volunteer commitment, and engagement. Morty said that might be something to consider when recruiting new volunteers for next year's Salish Sea Stewards training. Jason noted that volunteer participation in nearshore monitoring has been increasing each year. A volunteer appreciation picnic sponsored by the Friends of Skagit Beaches was held at Washington Park in Anacortes on June

12<sup>th</sup>. It was well attended by over 50 volunteers. Joan Drinkwin provided a brief update to the volunteers. The Salish Sea Stewards planning committee will be meeting soon to start planning next year's training.

- Bowman Bay Nearshore Restoration- Jay Lind: We now have a contract with the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group to continue working with volunteers throughout this summer to water and weed the plantings at Bowman Bay. A volunteer weeding and watering work party will be held at the site on Friday, June 22 from 10am to 1pm. RSVP Kelsey Taylor at [ktaylor@skagitfisheries.org](mailto:ktaylor@skagitfisheries.org).
- Fidalgo Bay Day- Pete Haase: Fidalgo Bay Day will be held September 15 this year at the Fidalgo Bay Resort. Volunteers are starting to line up to help with different tasks. Betty Carteret, with the Friends of Skagit Beaches has organized the Passport Activity and prizes for Fidalgo Bay Day for many years. This year, Betty volunteered to help the MRC organize the Passport Activity and purchase prizes with MRC Opportunity Funds. She was able to acquire several copies of the Seadoc Society's new kids' book "Explore the Salish Sea: A Nature Guide for Kids" to give as prizes for the discovery station passport stations. Betty is also taking the lead in putting together an educational marine plastics display with MRC Opportunity funds for Fidalgo Bay Day in partnership with Zero Waste Washington. The display will be used for other events as well.
- Kids on the Beach Pilot Project- Pete Haase: Mira Lutz with One Ocean Environmental has done an excellent job developing and implementing the Kids on the Beach Pilot Project for the MRC. 50 eighth grade students from Conway Middle School participated in the program this year. This project taught the eighth graders how to write research proposals, conduct field research, sort through historical data, and perform statistical analysis. The students presented their findings at the Science Symposium this Friday, May 11 at the Fidalgo Bay Resort. The students seemed to have a pretty good understanding of the scientific process and the different environmental variables related to nearshore restoration. There was an excellent article in the Skagit Valley Herald about the program. Pete shared a poster that the Conway Middle School students created about what they learned from this project. Pete and Mira are working on a final report. The program will be expanded to other schools next year. Pete also shared a poster created by the kids from Anacortes Island View Elementary School who came to the Fidalgo Bay RV Beach to learn about forage fish surveys on May 24<sup>th</sup>.
- Olympia Oyster Restoration- Paul Dinnel: Paul created a new native oyster restoration poster that was presented at the Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve Open House on May 19<sup>th</sup>. Field season is going really well. Volunteers are collecting quadrat samples of shells along transects for post larval settlement of native oysters this month. Native oysters are counted and measured to provide density and size data. Lots of new oyster settlement!
- Pinto Abalone Recovery- Paul Dinnel: The field work is now complete. The data will be analyzed and a final report will be generated before the end of September.
- Forage Fish Index Site Surveys- Pete Haase: Monthly surveys continue at Skagit MRC's three Forage Fish Index sites: Ship Harbor, Similk Bay on the Swinomish Reservation, and Samish Island. Pete said we are at the point now where we have enough trained volunteers and gear that we will probably add one or two more sites to survey. The sites will need to get approved as index sites by the WA Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). WDFW held a forage fish survey training for 25 Northwest Straits Initiative volunteers on June 1 at the Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve. There was even a waiting list for the training because it was so popular.
- Kayak Kelp Surveys - Phyllis Bravinder: Phyllis has been working with Suzanne Shull, Bob Weathers, Joan Drinkwin, and Tracy to try to get a better handle on who is doing what. We are also trying to connect some of the new Salish Sea Stewards volunteers who have expressed interest in this project with the volunteers who already have experience with the kelp surveys. The lead volunteers for each site will schedule their own surveys which will likely start in July. Survey sites include: Coffin Rocks, Biz Point, and Shannon Point. The Northwest Straits Commission hired Emily Bishop to help oversee this project and to make sure the volunteers have what they need.



#### **Certificate of Appreciation to Morty Cohen:** Sarah Tchang

Sarah presented Morty Cohen with a Certificate of Appreciation for his five years of service on the MRC. Since 2013, Morty contributed over 810 volunteer hours!! We are extremely grateful for Morty's leadership, dedication, enthusiasm, and fresh perspective that he brought to the MRC along with the many countless hours he contributed as the Project Lead for the Salish Sea Stewards program. Morty said he learned a lot as an MRC member and still plans on being an active volunteer in the community.



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

- Fidalgo Shoreline Academy- October 20: The Friends of Skagit Beaches will hold its 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Fidalgo Shoreline Academy on October 20<sup>th</sup> at the Fidalgo Bay Resort in Anacortes. It will be a full day of workshops focused on our marine ecosystems, regional watersheds, and wildlife, as well the rich cultural heritage of our region. The Keynote Speaker will be Dr. Jude Apple.

**The meeting adjourned at 11:12 a.m. The next MRC meeting will be a joint potluck MRC meeting with Island and Whatcom MRCs held Wednesday, July 18, 2018, 11am-1pm at Padilla Bay**



## JOINT MRC MEETING DRAFT SUMMARY

July 18, 2018  
11:00 am – 1:00 pm

Padilla Bay National Estuarine  
Research Reserve  
10441 Bayview Edison Rd  
Mt Vernon, WA 98273



<b>Agenda</b>	
10:45 am	Start potluck ( <i>Attendees are invited to grab lunch to eat during the meeting</i> )
11:00 am	Convene meeting. Review agenda.
11:05 am	Welcome: Jude Apple
11:10 am	Presentation and Discussion: Northwest Straits Initiative Strategic Plan: Lucas Hart
11:55 am	Presentation and Discussion: Marine debris: Eleanor Hines and Bob Seaman
12:40 pm	Roundtable
12:55 pm	Public comment
1:00 pm	Adjourn
<i>Attendees invited to stay after the meeting for networking and project collaboration with other MRC members.</i>	

### **In attendance:**

**Whatcom MRC:** Eleanor Hines, Austin Rose (Staff), Doug Stark, Chris Brown, Glen “Alex” Alexander, Bob Seaman

**Skagit MRC:** Tracy Alker (Staff), Sarah Tchang, Rachel Best, Paul Dinnel, Lynne Jordon, Nate Biletnikoff, Jude Apple, Phyllis Bravinder, Pete Haase, Darla Galsmith

**Island MRC:** Barbara Bennett, Ruth Richards, Anna Toledo (Staff), Elsa Schwartz, Matt Kukuk, Kelly Zupich, Kes Tautvydas

**Others:** Jamie Kilgo (DNR), Amy Keiper (Whatcom MRC Intern), Birdie Davenport (DNR), Erica Bleke (DNR), Jay Lind (NWSF), Suzanne Shull (PBNERR), Caroline Gibson (NWSF), Dan vanHees (NWSC), Kurt Baumgarten (Port of Bellingham), Jason Morgan (NWSF), Bridget Trosin (WA SeaGrant), Nicole Jordan (NWSC), Lucas Hart (NWSC), Janet St. Clair (Sound Water Stewards), John Amell (Island County resident)

**Convene Meeting:** Elsa Schwartz (Island County MRC) chaired the meeting and encouraged participants to stay after the meeting for further networking.

**Welcome:** Jude Apple, Research Director, Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (PBNERR), welcomed the group and encouraged visitors to view the aquarium. Jude explained that PBNERR is one of 30 Estuarine Research Reserve’s in the county, and the mission of the reserves is to advance education, research, and stewardship of these coastal resources and the partnerships with the MRCs has been very valuable.

**Northwest Straits Initiative Strategic Plan:** Northwest Straits Commission Director, Lucas Hart, provided an overview of the draft update to the Northwest Straits Initiative (NWSI) strategic plan and requested input from the MRC members present. The updated strategic plan will be developed as an overarching framework under which the MRC's can build work plans for specific progress they are working on. Lucas highlighted five themes: long term stable funding; structural support to MRCs; measuring progress; engagement and diversification; and messaging, identified for the draft strategic plan, which are further supported by goals, strategies and outcomes. Lucas also highlighted the stewardship goals which were developed as a resource for MRCs in project development. Several members provided feedback on the draft language and questions presented. Lucas is available for further discussion and feedback to help finalize the strategic plan.

**Marine Debris:** Eleanor began the presentation reminding members of an effort for the Coastal MRCs and the Puget Sound MRCs to collaborate on a project such as marine debris. There is still potential to collaborate and Eleanor asked MRCs to consider ways to partner and tackle the issue of marine debris. Eleanor emphasized that plastics and micro plastics are a global problem, meaning they are a land based problem as well as affecting the health of our marine ecosystems. Eleanor mentioned several projects and education and outreach efforts that are currently underway that the MRCs could lead in their counties – i.e. The Ocean Conservancy International Coastal Cleanup.

Eleanor and Bob recently attended a meeting in Burnaby B.C. sponsored by the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC), who is implementing a project entitled "Building Community Solutions for Marine Litter" to reduce land-based litter in the transboundary Tijuana River and Salish Sea watersheds. Both Eleanor and Bob highlighted their "take-aways" from that meeting and discussed efforts MRCs could take on locally, which included ways to connect with the younger generation.

Marine debris could be a topic at the annual MRC conference coming up in November.

**Roundtable:**

- Representatives from the DNR Aquatic Reserves shared their new rack cards applicable to Island, Whatcom, and Skagit Counties. There is interest for the state aquatic reserves to collaborate with the MRCs.
- Doug Stark mentioned that as marine debris is emerging as a huge concern there is curricula available that the NWSI could review and assess what is working well in particular areas and develop a protocol that could involve the MRCs and their local community.
- Suzanne Shull mentioned that there is a volunteer, Albert Foster, who is conducting eelgrass surveys by sonar and is available to chat with MRC members who are interested in monitoring in the region.

**Business items:** Island County letters of support: Kelly moved to approve the Chair to sign the letters of support for the Oak Harbor Marina restoration feasibility project, Seahorse Siesta restoration project, and Strawberry Point Preserve project. Barbara seconded. The motion passed.

**Public Comment:** no public comment.



# SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

*Minutes of the August 9, 2018, Skagit County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) meeting, held at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort*

## Attendees:

- **MRC Members Attending:** Jay Lind, Paul Dinnel, Tracy Alker, Sarah Tchang, Pete Haase, Lynne Jordan, Phyllis Bravinder, Nathan Biletnikoff; Betsy Stevenson; Todd Woodard
- **MRC Members Absent:** Matt Reynolds, Julie Barber, Jamey Selleck, Jude Apple, Rachel Best
- **Others Attending:** Annie Kent, SCPDS; Dan McCarty, SCPW; Bridget Trosin, WA Sea Grant; Craig Olson, Citizen

**Call to Order and Introduction:** Paul Dinnel called the meeting to order at 10:35 a.m. and opened the meeting with introductions.

**Approval of Minutes:** June 14 and July 18, 2018, MRC meeting minutes were approved as written.

**Public Comments:** Craig Olson thanked the MRC for all of the great work that the group does. Pete expressed his appreciation for Craig's microscopy skills and thanked him for setting up his really cool microscope to help with the Kids on the Beach field session.

## **WA Sea Level Rise Projections and Communications:** *Bridget Trosin, WA Sea Grant*

Sea level rise will likely intensify shoreline and coastal bluff erosion, storm surge, flooding, and saltwater intrusion. The three-year Washington Coastal Resilience Project (WCRP) is a collaborative effort to ramp up the state's preparedness for these coastal hazards. The project involves multiple partners from state and local government agencies, academic institutions and nonprofit organizations lead by Washington Sea Grant and the WA Department of Ecology. WCRP is primarily funded by a grant from the NOAA Regional Coastal Resilience Grants Program. Unlike other sea level rise projections that have been done in the past, WCRP has produced hi-resolution projections specific to Washington, factoring in sea level rise and vertical land movement. In addition, because the amount of sea level rise depends on how much and how quickly atmospheric greenhouse gases cause the earth system to warm, and how sensitive each process contributing to sea level rise is to that warming, WCRP has developed a separate set of projections for two greenhouse gas scenarios. Projections have now been developed for 171 locations along Washington's coastline. Results show that by 2100, projections for all greenhouse gas scenarios indicate a high likelihood of a sea level rise increase of at least 1.5 feet at the low end, with the potential for an increase in sea level rise of more than 8 feet at the upper end of the distribution.

Bridget's role in this project is to provide coastal communities (e.g. businesses, homeowners, and County and City planners) with better guidance and tools to help them understand these complicated projections so that they can make informative management decisions to become better prepared and more resilient to sea level rise. Bridget is meeting with MRCs to try to get a better understanding of local concerns with sea level rise, and identify who in the community may be most impacted, which community leaders are engaged in this topic, where the biggest hurdles are for addressing sea level rise, and what we can do to help address those hurdles. MRC members participated in a "Message Box" work session. Feedback from the MRCs will be used to develop key messages to better communicate sea level projections and potential impacts and produce outreach materials to meet specific local needs. It will also be used to help develop ideas for additional workshops that could help empower other organizations and community leaders in preparing for sea level rise. Bridget will follow-up with individual MRC members who are interested in getting more involved in this process. Tracy will forward Bridget's power point presentation to MRC members. For more information about WCRP go to:

[www.wacoastalnetwork.com/washington-coastal-resilience-project](http://www.wacoastalnetwork.com/washington-coastal-resilience-project).

## **Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Report:** *Nate Biletnikoff*

- **NWSC 5-Year Strategic Plan:** Lucas is gathering input from the NWSC and all of the MRCs before finalizing the 5-Year Strategic Plan. He presented the draft Plan at the joint MRC meeting in July with Skagit, Whatcom, and Island County MRCs.
- **NWSC Marine Program Manager Position:** There were 41 applicants. Interviews will be held mid-August. Decisions will be made soon.

- **Net Ecosystem Improvement Project:** The NWSC decided to change the name of the “Net Ecosystem Improvement” project to “Actions to Impacts” to help better communicate the work of the MRCs.
- **Presentation by Kirsten Feifel, Department of WA Department of Natural Resources (WA DNR):** WA DNR shared the results of a recent survey sent to key stakeholders in Puget Sound. The goal of the survey was to identify common concerns and priorities regarding our state’s marine waters and ways to improve communication and coordination among partners to link to broader efforts.
- **Next NWSC Meeting:** The next Commission meeting will be held Friday, August 24 in Bellingham from 9am-3pm. Meetings are open to the public.

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

- **NWSF Foundation Board Meetings:** Board meetings are held each month. Anne Murphy was elected as the new president at the June meeting. The next meeting will be held August 28.
- **Kukatali Preserve Restoration Project:** The Northwest Straits Foundation is providing some grant funding that was left over from the Shannon Point Restoration project to help support the Swinomish Tribe’s Kukatali Preserve Restoration project. Construction to remove the boulders and roadway is now underway. When complete, water will be allowed to move between Similk Bay and Kiket Bay during high tide and the new tombolo beach will provide habitat where forage fish can lay their eggs. Volunteers helped with the pre-construction monitoring including beach wrack, large woody debris, and forage fish surveys. Monitoring will continue after construction is complete.

#### **MRC Administrative Report: *Tracy Alker***

- **MRC Presentation to the Board of County Commissioners- Aug 7:** Tracy, Paul, and Pete provided an update to the Board of County Commissioners. The presentation highlighted the NWSI’s animated film “Engaging Conservation Leaders-Northwest Straits Initiative”, the Olympia Oyster Restoration project, the role of citizen scientists, and the Kids on the Beach project. The presentation was well received by the Commissioners. The Commissioners were also provided with copies of the 2017 Skagit MRC Annual Report and the 2017 NWSI Annual Report.
- **2018 MRC Conference - Ignite Presentation:** One of the planned sessions at the MRC conference this year is the MRC Ignite Presentation. The ignite presentations consist of 20 slides, mainly image/graphics with limited text, and they automatically advance every 15 seconds. Presentations should focus on a single project or theme and include highlights, milestones, and major accomplishments where possible. An MRC member will need to take the lead on this.
- **MRC Conference Accommodations:** Tracy reminded MRC members that if they are interested in reserving a house at Fort Worden they can use the [online system or by calling reservations](#). If there are several MRC members who are interested in sharing a house at Fort Warden, Tracy offered to help coordinate group reservations for accommodations. So far Phyllis is the only Skagit MRC member who has expressed interest in sharing a house. There are several other options for hotels in Port Townsend that offer per diem rates in Port Townsend. MRC members are responsible for making their own hotel arrangements, but will get reimbursed for the hotel and travel at the government per diem rate. Just be sure to provide copies of your invoice as well as a photo copy of the credit card that was used.
- **MyCoast App-Statewide Launch:** The MyCoast smartphone app that Snohomish MRC uses will be launching statewide in September. The expansion is being led by the WA Dept of Natural Resources (DNR). A steering committee has also been formed to help manage the app, its tools, and outreach efforts. That team includes USGS, WA Sea Grant, DNR, and the NWSC. The MyCoast app includes five different reporting tools: abandoned boat, creosote piling, storm surge, king tide and beach photos. With the statewide launch of the app, other interested MRCs now have the opportunity to select beaches to include in the reporting tool. The products of that campaign will be made available to all MRCs. Skagit MRC will need to decide if we want to participate in the expansion. If so, we need to identify one MRC member to serve as the point of contact for ongoing communications about the app, and ideally have at least one location in our county to include in the beach photo reporting tool before the statewide launch. Sasha said that she’d be happy to host a WebEx to bring those interested members together and share more detailed information. For more information about the MyCoast App, go to: <https://mycoast.org/wa>.
- **County Clean Water Facebook Page:** We’ve been invited to feature MRC projects on the Clean Water Facebook page. It’s a great way to promote our work and special events. They have over 560 followers now, and the page keeps growing! Karen Dubois offered to work directly with individual MRC members to post information: [www.facebook.com/skagitcountycleanwater/](http://www.facebook.com/skagitcountycleanwater/).

## Project Status & Discussion

- Salish Sea Stewards- Pete Haase: The new Salish Sea Stewards graduates are helping with a wide variety of programs including Skagit MRC's forage fish surveys, Olympia oyster restoration and kelp surveys. The Salish Sea Stewards Planning Committee recently held a meeting to discuss the best options for running the program in 2019. The next Salish Sea Stewards social event will take place after the Crandall Spit Beach Cleanup on September 24<sup>th</sup>.
- Bowman Bay Restoration-Jay Lind: The Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group (SFEG), on behalf of the Skagit MRC, coordinated a weeding and watering work party at the Bowman Bay restoration site on August 3, at 10am. Unfortunately, only one volunteer showed up to help. The final work party will take place August 31<sup>st</sup> from 10:00a.m to 1:00p.m. The shrubs continue to look a little crispy but the dune grass, gumweed, and other forbs are growing in well. As part of the larger restoration project (not currently funded under the MRC grant), Jason Morgan leads the monthly beach seining surveys and Pete Haase leads the monthly fish surveys on the same day. The next one is scheduled for August 30<sup>th</sup> at 8:00a.m. No forage fish eggs have been found at Bowman Bay so far this year.
- Fidalgo Bay Day- Pete Haase: Fidalgo Bay Day will be held September 15 this year at the Fidalgo Bay Resort. Volunteers are lining up to help with different tasks. The event will include kid-friendly crafts, games, and interactive educational displays, complimentary samples of local seafood, beach seining, beach walks, the Shannon Point Marine Center's aquarium touch tank, and Samish's no-host salmon BBQ.
- Kids on the Beach Pilot Project- Pete Haase: Mira and Pete are working on a final report. This program will be expanded to other schools next year.
- Olympia Oyster Restoration- Paul Dinneel: It has been a very busy field season with lots of volunteers contributing lots of volunteer hours. There has been an impressive amount of Olympia oyster settlement in Fidalgo Bay this year, even in areas beyond the shell enhancement plots where the oyster larvae have settled on clam shells. As part of the larger native oyster restoration project, the Puget Sound Restoration Fund plans to put out additional shell and oyster seed this year in partnership with the Samish Tribe on the west side of Fidalgo Bay at Weaverling Spit. They will also be placing additional oyster shell and seed at Cap Sante area and along the trestle. Paul is working on a two-year project report. Paul led a tour of the Fidalgo Bay Olympia Oyster restoration project with Congressman Rick Larsen and Laura Gelwicks (Congressman Larsen's Community Liaison). 11 people participated in the tour, including a local reporter, which started at Shell's RV Park at Little Crandall Spit on the east side of Fidalgo Bay. The tour presented an excellent visual of the success of this project.
- Pinto Abalone Recovery- Paul Dinneel: Field work ended in April. As part of the larger project, Puget Sound Restoration Fund (PSRF) has been putting a lot of effort in their hatchery production to produce more juvenile abalone for outplanting. So far it has been very successful. PSRF is working with two graduate students from Western Washington University on bio-preservation with pinto abalone sperm to enhance the ability to fertilize eggs in the hatchery. They are also looking at larval outplanting of abalone which in theory would take less time, less tank space, and would be less expensive than outplanting juvenile abalone.
- Forage Fish Surveys- Pete Haase: Volunteers continue to collect monthly samples at the three index sites for WDFW. Lots of spawning happening at Similk Bay. But not much happening at the other sites. Monthly forage fish surveys also continue at the MRC nearshore restoration sites.
- Kayak Kelp Surveys - Phyllis Bravinder: Volunteers surveyed the kelp beds at Coffin rocks, Biz Point, and Shannon Point in July and August. The final surveys for the season will take place in September. All of the data collected is being sent to Suzanne Shull.
- Potential Beach Nourishment Project- Pete Haase: There is a stretch of beach located at March's Point that Pete said would be a good candidate for a beach nourishment project to help improve forage fish spawning habitat. The site is owned by Andeavor Refinery and is located on a north facing section of beach with good overhanging vegetation. The Committee agreed that this sounds like a good project. Pete will contact the Northwest Straits Foundation to see if they could help find funding for this project. The NWSF might also know who to contact at Andeavor Refinery to get permission to do the project.

## Miscellaneous Events and Announcements:

- Fidalgo Shoreline Academy- October 20: The Friends of Skagit Beaches will hold its 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Fidalgo Shoreline Academy on October 20<sup>th</sup> at the Fidalgo Bay Resort in Anacortes. It will be a full day of workshops focused on our marine ecosystems, regional watersheds, and wildlife, as well the rich cultural heritage of our region. The Keynote Speaker will be Dr. Jude Apple.
- Crandall Spit Beach Cleanup - September 24, 9:30-11:30am: Volunteers are needed to help with a beach cleanup at Crandall Spit. We will meet for the event orientation at Crandall Spit Community Center on West March's Point Road,

just north of the trestle. Parking is limited, so attendees are encouraged to carpool from the March's Point Park & Ride to the Community Center. A Salish Sea Stewards potluck and speaker to follow cleanup from 11:30am - 1:00pm. Please RSVP to [salishseastewaerds@gmail.com](mailto:salishseastewaerds@gmail.com). *(This cleanup is sponsored by Skagit MRC/Salish Sea Stewards, Shell Puget Sound Refinery, Friends of Skagit Beaches, Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve Citizens Stewardship Committee, and Skagit County Public Works)*

- Marine Debris Data Collection, Sorting and Cataloguing -September 25, 9:00am – Noon: Volunteers are needed to help sort and catalogue trash removed from Crandall Spit on September 24 at the Padilla Bay Research Reserve. We will be using a new data collection protocol developed by the EPA and designed to better understand the types and sources of marine debris on our beaches. This data collection is critical to move a simple beach cleanup into the realms of citizen science, driving solutions and building scientific understanding of the problem of marine debris. Please RSVP to [salishseastewaerds@gmail.com](mailto:salishseastewaerds@gmail.com). *(This project is sponsored by Skagit MRC/Salish Sea Stewards, Shell Puget Sound Refinery, Friends of Skagit Beaches, Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve Citizens Stewardship Committee, and Skagit County Public Works)*
- Shoreline Landowner- Vegetation Management Workshop -Oct 16<sup>th</sup>, 5:30pm-8:00pm at the Fidalgo Bay Resort. Join the NWSF and Skagit MRC at Fidalgo Bay to learn about coastal processes and how to use native vegetation to manage your landscape for slope stability and wildlife habitat. Speakers include Ben Alexander and Lisa Kaufman.
- Skagit Land Trust Campaign to Protect Samish Island Property: The Skagit Land Trust is currently seeking grants and using its own funds to purchase and preserve over 34 acres of old growth forest and beach that make up the entrance to Samish Island. This ecologically important land is part of the Samish Flower Farm property that is now on the market and has sparked interest from developers. To help ensure the Skagit Land Trust will have enough funding to purchase the property they are trying to raise at least \$300,000 in donations from the community. The Skagit Land Trust is currently offering tours of the property to increase awareness and support to protect the property. For more information go to: <http://www.skagitlandtrust.org/news.aspx?postid=6339>.

**The meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, September 13, 2018, 9am-11am at the Skagit County Administration Building in Mount Vernon.**



# SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

*Minutes of the September 13, 2018, Skagit County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) meeting, held at the Skagit County Administration Building in Mount Vernon*

## Attendees:

- **MRC Members Attending:** Tracy Alker, Sarah Tchang, Kari Odden (Lynne Jordan's Alternate), Betsy Stevenson; Todd Woodard, Julie Barber, Jamey Selleck, Jude Apple, Darla Gay Smith (Rachel Best's Alternate)
- **MRC Members Absent:** Matt Reynolds, Rachel Best Jay Lind, Paul Dinnel, Pete Haase, Lynne Jordan, Phyllis Bravinder, Nathan Biletnikoff
- **Others Attending:** Sarah Brown, Winston Churchill Fellowship Recipient; Todd Mitchell, Swinomish Tribe; Jason Morgan, NWSF

**Call to Order and Introduction:** Sarah Tchang called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. and opened the meeting with introductions.

**Approval of Minutes:** August 9, 2018, MRC meeting minutes were approved as written.

**Public Comments:** No comments

## **Public Engagement in Marine Planning Discussion:** *Sarah Brown, Marine Planner and Churchill Fellow Recipient*

Sarah Brown, a freelance consulting marine manager and planner from Scotland, recently received the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust UK Fellowship to learn about the different public engagement techniques in marine planning and maritime activities being used across the United States. She will be meeting with different stakeholder groups, marine planners, environmental conflict managers, invasive species experts, etc. on the east coast, west coast, and Great Lakes areas over a six week period. Sarah's goal is to learn how to best approach people and how to continue to keep them interested and engaged. Sarah was really interested in learning more about the Northwest Straits Initiative model. She talked to Lucas and plans to meet with several different MRCs to learn how we operate and the challenges we face. She was particularly interested in the volunteer component and how we are able to get and continue to keep so many different interest groups engaged and productive, even with very little funding for projects. Sarah asked some really thought provoking questions, reflecting on what brought the MRC members to the table in the first place and what keeps everyone coming back. MRC members said that with the citizen-based bottom-up approach of the MRC, there is local buy-in and a real connection of place and the feeling of being more vested in the local community. The diversity of interest groups represented on the MRC has also increased our own awareness of the different local interests and helps build stronger partnerships. How do we engage the wider community? A public outreach component is built into most of our projects. Public engagement through volunteerism and community events like Fidalgo Bay Day is extremely powerful. What are some of our challenges? Reaching a consensus on priorities and actions, matching state priorities, limited funding and resources for projects, assigning a MRC Project Lead to see the project through, getting recognition for MRC projects and actions, and potential conflicts of interest of different interest groups represented on the MRC. MRC members will get a chance to review Sarah's report for accuracy and can comment on it before it gets published. Check out Sarah's blog to get regular updates on her travels: [www.facebook.com/SarahWCMT](https://www.facebook.com/SarahWCMT) and her Twitter feed @sarahc2w or email her at sarah@c2w.org.uk.

## **Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Report:** *Jude Apple*

- **MRC Conference, November 16-17, 2018 at Fort Worden:** Conference registration will be sent soon. Check for updates at the conference website: <http://nwstraits.org/2018-mrc-conference>. Senator Ranker is scheduled to attend part of the conference.
- **Puget Sound Partnership 2018 draft Action Agenda:** has been released for public comment.
- **NWSC Marine Program Manager Position:** Dana Oster was recently hired for the Marine Program Manager position. Dana is currently working with the Northwest Straits Foundation as a nearshore restoration specialist and will soon be taking on the NWSC Actions to Impacts Project (formerly known as Net Ecosystem Improvement).

- MyCoast App State Wide Launch: All MRCs are encouraged to participate in the statewide launch of MyCoast by identifying a local beach (or beaches) to include in the “take a beach photo” reporting tool. Skagit MRC members suggested adding the Bowman Bay restoration site. Jason Morgan offered to work with Sasha to get the Bowman Bay beach restoration site information set-up on the app.
- Next NWSC Meeting: The next Commission meeting will be held Friday, September 28, by WebEx 10am-12:00pm.

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

- Shoreline Armor Reduction Program (SHARP) - Samish Island Property Site Visits: The Foundation is working to schedule technical site visits with Coastal Geologic Services at three different private properties on Samish Island this month. 2 of the 3 sites have some form of armor, but it is uncertain if either will turn into a removal opportunity. Betsy plans to attend the site visits on behalf of the MRC.
- Potential Beach Nourishment Project: At our MRC meeting last month, Pete identified a potential beach nourishment project located on March’s Point tidelands owned by Tesoro/Andeavor. The Committee expressed full support of the project. The project site is located on a north facing section of beach with good overhanging vegetation and a presence of forage fish eggs. The Coastal Geologic Service report that was completed for the MRC several years ago also identified this area for restoration or enhancement. Pete and Lisa walked the beach with representatives from Tesoro/Andeavor on August 30<sup>th</sup>. The reps really like the project idea, especially after Pete pointed out the eggs on the beach, and are interested in helping to fund it! Lisa is moving forward with the application process to apply for funding.
- Boeing Grant for Stormwater Projects: The Foundation received a \$50,000 grant from Boeing for MRC stormwater projects in Snohomish, Island, and Skagit Counties.
- NWSI Marine Debris Work: The Foundation just received \$221K (over 3 years) through the NOAA marine debris program for crab pot removal and outreach with Clallam and Jefferson MRCs. Jason and Nate have been tasked with chairing a session on marine debris at the upcoming MRC Conference. Jason will be highlighting the work being done by the MRCs.

#### **MRC Administrative Report: Tracy Alker**

- MRC Display at the Skagit River Salmon Fest: Tracy thanked the volunteers who helped host the MRC display at the Skagit River Festival last weekend including Rachel Best, Darla Gay Smith, Peggy Flynn, and Ryan Crabtree.
- Current MRC Grant Expires -Sept 30<sup>th</sup>: All deliverables and invoices are due! MRC members were asked to submit MRC-related hours and project updates.
- New MRC Grant Starts - Oct 1<sup>st</sup>: The Grant is currently being routed for signatures. The contracting process for our grant-related MRC projects will begin soon.
- MRC Conference (Nov 16-17 at Fort Townsend)
  - Ignite presentation: We need to identify an MRC member to take the lead on this. Nate said he won’t have time to do this.
  - MRC Display: MRC members were asked to provide ideas for the MRC display at the conference. What projects should be highlighted? Are there any ideas for making it more interactive? Are there any MRC members who would like to take the lead on this?
- October 11 - MRC Meeting Agenda/Minutes: Tracy announced that she will not be here for the October 11 MRC meeting and is seeking a volunteer to take notes/minutes. MRC members were also encouraged to provide ideas for guest speakers and agenda topics for the October 11<sup>th</sup> meeting.
- King County Boat Tour - October 11: King County invited MRC representatives for a boat ride on October 11 to share how they did a study to evaluate human induced changes along 90 miles of marine shoreline. Most of the changes observed were associated with repairs to existing bulkheads versus brand new bulkheads where they didn’t exist before. They also observed relatively low rates of the changes being permitted. In addition to Betsy, there is room for one more Skagit MRC member. Please let Tracy know if you would like to go.

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

- Salish Sea Stewards: Salish Sea Steward volunteers helped staff the MRC display at the Salmon Fest last weekend and will be helping with FBD this weekend. They have been busy helping with other MRC projects as well such as the beach seining and forage fish monitoring, oyster monitoring, kelp monitoring. The next SSS social event will be held after the Crandall Spit Beach Cleanup on Sept 24<sup>th</sup>. There will be a presentation on plastics and recycling. Lunch

provided by Shell Refinery. We are starting to promote next year's training which will likely happen in March 2019. We will need to go through the competitive process again to contract a volunteer program coordinator.

- **Bowman Bay Restoration:** The last weeding/watering party coordinated by the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group (SFEG) took place on August 31<sup>st</sup>. SFEG will be providing a summary report by the end of this month. The shrubs continue to look a little crispy but the dune grass, gumweed, and other forbs are growing in well. The Foundation has \$400 to purchase new plants. The new MRC grant has allocated \$2400 to contract with SFEG to continue plant maintenance work. As part of the larger restoration project (not currently funded under the MRC grant), Jason Morgan leads the monthly beach seining surveys and Pete Haase leads the monthly fish surveys on the same day. The next beach seining and forage fish surveys are scheduled for Tuesday, October 17. No forage fish eggs have been found at Bowman Bay so far this year.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** Fidalgo Bay Day will be held this Saturday, September 15 this year at the Fidalgo Bay Resort. Everything is now in place and ready to go! Set-up will take place this Friday. It would be great to get a few additional volunteers signed up to help give some of the other volunteers a break. Several MRC members are helping out with the event. The event will include kid-friendly crafts, games, and interactive educational displays, complimentary samples of local seafood, beach seining, beach walks, the Shannon Point Marine Center's aquarium touch tank, and Samish's no-host salmon BBQ. Tracy, Betsy, Rick Haley, Dan McCarty, and Heather Bickford will be hosting the MRC display and games and passport activities including: the Sormwater Golf Game, the Forage Fish Bean Bag Toss Game, the "Living Shorelines" display/demonstration, and the scuba diver photo booth. FBD is important because it helps adults and kids make the connection of the estuary in our own back yard and the creatures that live there and how our actions can impact the water quality and marine life.
- **Kids on the Beach Pilot Project:** The final report is now complete and will be shared with MRC members and posted on the MRC website. Mira is now working for The SeaDoc Society and has expressed interest in helping the MRC expand the Kids on the Beach project in collaboration with SeaDoc. Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve Citizen Stewardship Committee has also offered funding to help augment the program. The details still need to be worked out.
- **Olympia Oyster Restoration:** As part of the larger native oyster restoration project, the Puget Sound Restoration Fund applied for permits to distribute additional shell and oyster seed this year on the west side of Fidalgo Bay at Weaverling Spit in partnership with the Samish Tribe. They will also be placing additional oyster shell and seed at Cap Sante area and along the trestle. Paul is working on a two-year project report. Paul will present his Fidalgo Bay Native Oyster Restoration poster at the upcoming Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve Plan Update stakeholder meeting October 1.
- **Pinto Abalone Recovery:** The final report will be complete by the end of this month.
- **Forage Fish Surveys:** Volunteers continue to collect monthly samples at the three index sites for The Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). WDFW now has new staff in place so communications will improve and sampling results will happen a lot faster. Lots of spawning happening at Similk Bay. But not much happening at the other sites. Eggs have been detected at the Ship Harbor site along the Guemes Channel once again, which is rare. Monthly forage fish surveys also continue at the MRC nearshore restoration sites.
- **Kayak Kelp Surveys:** Five volunteers surveyed the kelp beds at Coffin rocks, Biz Point, and Shannon Point in July and August. The final surveys for the season will take place in September. All of the data collected is being sent to Suzanne Shull for analysis and to post in Sound IQ. Jamey noted that they are finishing up year one of the state-wide kelp recovery effort and The Data Gaps Analysis and the Literature Review reports will be finalized soon.

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

- **Fish Assemblages of the Salish Sea - NOAA Workshop, October 18:** Jamey said that anyone can listen in on the workshop via [www.GoToMeeting.com](http://www.GoToMeeting.com). This workshop came out of the Rockfish Recovery Plan. They will be going over large data sets to look at the changes in fish presence, abundance, composition, and trophic level interaction throughout the Salish Sea.
- **Orca Vigil- September 16, 10am-2pm at Bowman Bay:** Samish Indian Nation invites everyone to join them for a ceremony at Bowman Bay to honor the lost baby orca and grieve with the mother, Tahlequah. Lunch will be provided on the Rosario side.
- **Crandall Spit Beach Cleanup - September 24, 9:30-11:30am:** Volunteers are needed to help with a beach cleanup at Crandall Spit. We will meet for the event orientation at Crandall Spit Community Center on West March's Point Road, just north of the trestle. Parking is limited, so attendees are encouraged to carpool from the March's Point Park & Ride to the Community Center. A Salish Sea Stewards potluck and speaker to follow cleanup from 11:30am - 1:00pm. Please RSVP to [salishseastewards@gmail.com](mailto:salishseastewards@gmail.com). *(This cleanup is sponsored by Skagit MRC/Salish Sea Stewards, Shell Puget Sound Refinery, Friends of Skagit Beaches, Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve Citizens Stewardship Committee, and Skagit County Public Works)*

- Marine Debris Data Collection, Sorting and Cataloguing -September 25, 9:00am – Noon: Volunteers are needed to help sort and catalogue trash removed from Crandall Spit on September 24 at the Padilla Bay Research Reserve. We will be using a new data collection protocol developed by the EPA and designed to better understand the types and sources of marine debris on our beaches. This data collection is critical to move a simple beach cleanup into the realms of citizen science, driving solutions and building scientific understanding of the problem of marine debris. Please RSVP to [salishseastewaerds@gmail.com](mailto:salishseastewaerds@gmail.com). (This project is sponsored by Skagit MRC/Salish Sea Stewards, Shell Puget Sound Refinery, Friends of Skagit Beaches, Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve Citizens Stewardship Committee, and Skagit County Public Works)
- The Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve Plan Update: Stakeholder meeting – October 1, 1pm-3pm at the NW Educational Service District, Anacortes. RSVP Birdie Davenport at [ROBERTA.DAVENPORT@dnr.wa.gov](mailto:ROBERTA.DAVENPORT@dnr.wa.gov)
- Shoreline Landowner- Vegetation Management Workshop -Oct 16<sup>th</sup>, 5:30pm-8:00pm at the Fidalgo Bay Resort. Join the NWSF and Skagit MRC at Fidalgo Bay to learn about coastal processes and how to use native vegetation to manage your landscape for slope stability and wildlife habitat. Speakers include Ben Alexander and Lisa Kaufman.
- Fidalgo Shoreline Academy- October 20: The Friends of Skagit Beaches will hold its 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Fidalgo Shoreline Academy on October 20<sup>th</sup> at the Fidalgo Bay Resort in Anacortes. It will be a full day of workshops focused on our marine ecosystems, regional watersheds, and wildlife, as well the rich cultural heritage of our region. The Keynote Speaker will be Dr. Jude Apple.
- Skagit Land Trust Seeking Land Steward for Kelly's Point: The Skagit Land Trust is currently seeking a land steward for Kelly's Point on Guemes Island. The land steward would make a long-term commitment to help monitor and maintain the marine shoreline property.

#### **MRC Membership Application- Todd Mitchell:**

Julie Barber requested that Todd Mitchell take her place as the Swinomish representative on the MRC. Todd is the Director of the Department of Environmental Protection and a Swinomish Tribal member. The Committee voted in favor of making the recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to appoint Todd Mitchell to the Skagit MRC as Julie's replacement. There were no objections. Six MRC members who were unable to attend the meeting voted in favor via proxy. A resolution amending appointing Todd to the Skagit MRC will need to be signed by the Board of County Commissioners to make it official. Tracy will email Todd a copy of the MRC Bylaws and MRC Membership Orientation Handbook.

#### **Certificate of Appreciation - Julie Barber:**

Julie was presented with a Certificate of Appreciation that was signed by all of the Committee members. Julie has been a member of the Skagit MRC since 2013. We are extremely grateful for the wealth of knowledge Julie brought to the MRC and many hours she dedicated to teaching the Salish Sea Stewards about shellfish and treaty fishing rights.

**The meeting adjourned at 10:50 a.m. The next MRC meeting will be held Thursday, October 11, 2018, 9am-11am at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort in Anacortes.**



# SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

*Minutes of the October 11, 2018, Skagit County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) meeting, held at Fidalgo Bay RV Resort*

## Attendees:

- **MRC Members Attending:** Todd Woodard, Nathan Biletnikoff, Jude Apple, Rick Haley (Tracy Alker's Alternate), Sarah Tchang, Jay Lind, Lynne Jordan, Pete Haase, Paul Dinnel, Phyllis Bravinder, Darla Gay Smith (Rachel Best's Alternate)
- **MRC Members Absent:** Tracy Alker, Rachel Best, Todd Mitchell, Betsy Stevenson
- **Others Attending:** Wayne Huseby, Friends of Skagit Beaches; Dana Oster, NWSC

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

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

**Public Comments:** No comments

## **Skagit County Water Quality Update:** *Rick Haley, Skagit County Water Quality Analyst*

The Skagit County Water Quality Monitoring Program began in 2003 to assess current conditions and to track water quality trends over time. Ambient sampling occurs every two weeks at 40 sites in agricultural-area streams in Skagit County. The sampling sites start upstream at Hamilton and continue down through the rest of the county. Water quality parameters include: temperature, dissolved oxygen, nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus), turbidity, pH, and fecal coliform bacteria. In addition to the regular ambient sampling, storm samples are also collected after big rain events to identify fecal coliform issues and track down sources. Water quality can be impacted by the loss of riparian canopy, poor land use practices, and invasive reed canary grass resulting in low summer flows, high water temps, sedimentation, and low dissolved oxygen. These environmental stressors can impact the health and survival of salmonids. Some of the other environmental stressors are toxic chemicals that runoff from streets and parking lots, as well as fecal coliform bacteria from homes, farms, pets, wildlife, and waterfowl. Fecal coliform bacteria can become concentrated in shellfish which can make people sick if consumed. In 2008, County staff collected a sample from the Samish River with a really high fecal coliform count of 17,000 cfu, well above the standard mean of less than 100 cfu. This resulted in shellfish harvest closures in Samish Bay due to health concerns which lead to the Clean Samish Initiative. The Clean Samish Initiative is made up of 20 governmental, tribal and private organizations all working to clean up fecal coliform pollution in the Samish Basin. We are making progress and have had fewer shellfish harvest closures in recent years. Rick described the water quality in each of the water basins. The water quality in the Skagit River is generally pretty good overall. Several of the sloughs that flow into Padilla Bay tend to have poor water quality and the agricultural systems that pump nutrients directly into Padilla Bay can trigger algal blooms. Skagit County is working to find the pollution sources through monitoring, working with landowners, and finding resources to help improve the water quality. Some of the new techniques being used to track sources include chemical tracers, sewage sniffing dogs, and DNA testing. Public education and outreach is also an important part of the program. The 2017 Skagit County Monitoring Program Annual Report is available on the Skagit County website:

<https://www.skagitcounty.net/Departments/PublicWorksSurfaceWaterManagement/wq.htm>.

## **Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Report:** *Nate Biletnikoff and Jude Apple*

- **Kelp Recovery Plan:** Dana Oster is NWSC's new Project Lead for the Kelp Recovery plan. They are in the process of figuring out the data gaps, priorities, and what they can accomplish in the next year or two with a smaller budget. They are also planning to have a one day workshop with all of the folks involved in kelp monitoring.
- **PSP Vital Signs and Indicators:** The Science Advisory Committee is re-evaluating the vital signs and indicators in the Puget Sound Partnership Action Agenda which will be updated in 2022.
- **Derelict Boat Removal in Snohomish County:** Around 10 derelict boats have been in Snohomish County removed so far.
- **Environmental DNA (eDNA) Presentation:** eDNA samples are collected from soil, seawater, snow, air, etc. rather than directly from an individual organism. This method of collecting DNA minimizes any stress induced by human

interaction. eDNA can be used for monitoring biodiversity and conservation, and can also be used to study the presence of species and the locations of threatened or endangered species at larger spatial scales and across all environments more efficiently.

- NWSC 5-Year Strategic Plan Draft: Lucas recently made the rounds with MRC members and the NWSC to seek approval for the format of the Draft Strategic Plan. The Plan itself has not been finalized or approved yet.
- Pacific States/BC Oil Spill Task Force Salish Sea Shared Waters Forum- Oct 3 & 4: The Northwest Straits Commission was well represented at the two-day kickoff meeting along with several other stakeholders. The purpose of the forum was to share information and ideas about policies, practices, and safeguards to minimize the risk and impacts of oil spills in the Salish Sea. For more information: <http://oilspilltaskforce.org/task-force-events/salish-sea-forum/>. Several oil spill response table top exercises have also been held at Padilla Bay. Shell and Tesoro Refineries also regularly host oil spill response table top exercises as well.

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

- MRC Opportunity Fund: The Foundation approved a \$6,000 request for Skagit MRC's Salish Sea Stewards retreat.
- Boeing Stormwater Grant: The Foundation received a \$50,000 Grant from Boeing for MRC stormwater projects in Skagit, Island, and Snohomish Counties. Details still need to be worked out.
- Next NWSF Board Meeting - October 24.

#### **MRC Administrative Report: Rick Haley**

- New MRC Grant: The new grant has been signed with a start date of October 1. Tracy is still working on getting the other MRC Grant related contracts signed.
- MRC Conference: The MRC Conference will be held at Fort Worden in Port Townsend Nov 16-17. MRC members are responsible for making their own arrangements for lodging. Reimbursement will be at the government per diem rate.
  - MRC Ignite Presentation: Pete agreed to do the MRC Ignite Presentation to highlight the Kids on the Beach program at the MRC Conference this year. Pete will work with Mira on the presentation since it will be part of a joint project with the SeaDoc Society this year.
- MRC display: Tracy is seeking MRC display ideas for the conference. We could just highlight two or three of our favorite projects, or highlight all 20 years of accomplishments. Rick encouraged people to get their ideas back to Tracy.
- November 8 MRC Meeting: The Committee voted to cancel the November 8<sup>th</sup> MRC meeting because the majority of MRC members will be attending the MRC Conference the following week.
- MRC Display at Fidalgo Shoreline Academy: Rick will host the MRC display at the Fidalgo Shoreline Academy.

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

- Salish Sea Stewards: We recently sent out a Request for Quotes and Qualifications for a Volunteer Program Coordinator. It was posted on the County MRSC Roster, on the MRC website, on the SSS Facebook page, and on "The Wave". Proposals are due October 29<sup>th</sup>. The SSS Planning Subcommittee will be meeting on November 2 to evaluate the proposals. Wayne reported that the Friends of Skagit Beaches is committed to continue covering some of the funding that the MRC Grant can't cover next year.
- Fidalgo Bay Day: Fidalgo Bay Resort has been reserved for next year's Fidalgo Bay Day on August 24<sup>th</sup>, 2019. A round of applause was given to Pete for all the work he puts into coordinating this event for the past several years. Jay will be the new Project Lead for next year's Fidalgo Bay Day.
- Forage Fish Index Site Surveys: All seven MRCs collect forage fish data at index sites. Dana will be taking over the lead of this regional project for the NWSC. Skagit MRC conducts index site surveys at Similk Bay, Ship Harbor along Guemes Channel and Samish Island. WDFW has a new coordinator for the forage fish index sites. A phone conference with Phil Dion and Lisa Helliar at WDFW will be held October 24<sup>th</sup>. Wayne thanked Pete for leading the forage fish surveys in Skagit County for the last six years. The Orca Task Force has identified forage fish as a critical component.
- Kids on the Beach Project: Last year we contracted with Mira Lutz to develop and implement this pilot project. Mira worked with Conway School and got 50 kids to participate. Mira recently got hired with the SeaDoc Society as their new Education Coordinator. In 2019, we hope to continue working with Mira to expand the Kids on the Beach project in collaboration with The SeaDoc Society/ UC Davis. We are currently working on getting a contract in place.
- Bowman Bay Restoration: We are in the process of contracting with SFEG to do Bowman Bay watering and weeding in

2019. The plants seem to be filling in nicely. Large Woody debris has started accumulating on the beach and seems to be helping to protect the plants and shoreline. The beach slope also seems to be leveling out more.

- Pinto Abalone Recovery: Paul worked with Josh Bouma to finalize the 2018 report which has been submitted. As part of the larger project, PSRF is working with Western Washington students to seed larvae in enclosed modules in the water to see if they will settle into the rocky substrate. If successful, this method would be much faster than raising juvenile abalone in the hatchery for two years before outplanting. They are also working on outplanting smaller juvenile abalone rather than larger ones for that same reason. Work under the new MRC Grant will continue in 2019.
- Olympia Oyster Restoration: 2018 was a very productive season and we had a ton of volunteer help. There was a lot of oyster settlement in places we've never looked before, especially up around Shell's RV Park, outside of the enhanced shell plots. We now have an estimated 3 million oysters in Fidalgo Bay. Paul is working on the data analysis and report which will likely be done sometime in November. Next year Paul will be working with Jude to look for potential areas in Padilla Bay for oyster restoration work. WDFW is also interested in transporting some of their oysters over to the other side of March's Point. On October 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>, the Puget Sound Restoration Fund will distribute additional shell on the Swinomish tidelands on the east side of Fidalgo Bay and across Weaverling Spit to encourage more settlement.
- Kayak Kelp Surveys: Suzanne Shull will be giving a presentation on kelp monitoring data at the Fidalgo Bay Shoreline Academy on October 20. Preliminary data indicates that the kelp beds in Skagit County waters seem to be more stable than the kelp beds located farther to the south.

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

- Kukatali Preserve Restoration Project: Restoration work is now complete. Where there used to be riprap there is now a lot of driftwood. There is also a new channel separating the mainland from Kiket Island during high tide.
- Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program (ESRP) Grant Funding Listings: Paul offered congrats to the various organizations in Skagit County for the most recent ESRP listings for grant funding. Skagit Land Trust's proposals for Kelly's Point and Samish Flower Farm ranked really well. They were above the 8-million-dollar funding level and are expected to get funded as long as the state's legislature proceeds normally. The Northwest Straits Foundation is also on the list for probable funding for Samish Island and Similk Bay shoreline restoration projects.
- Fidalgo Bay Water Quality Testing Update: Skagit Land Trust's water quality testing on the Fidalgo Bay Graber property in collaboration with Samish Indian Nation's water quality testing at the nearby outfalls have not found in any red flags. All results from Edge Analytical show fecal coliform levels to be clean.
- Fidalgo Shoreline Academy- October 20: Jude Apple will be the keynote speaker at the Fidalgo Shoreline Academy this year.
- City of Anacortes Job Opportunity: City of Anacortes is seeking a new Storm Water Coordinator to replace Matt Reynolds who recently retired. Because Matt retired, he can no longer represent the City of Anacortes on the Skagit MRC.
- Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve Management Plan Update: A meeting with all of the stakeholders was recently held in Anacortes. WA Department of Natural Resources is working on a draft plan that should be ready by December. They looked over the work that has been done over the last decade and came up with good ideas for the plan.

**The meeting adjourned at around 11:00 a.m. The next MRC meeting will be held December 13, 2018 at the Port of Anacortes (*The November 8<sup>th</sup> MRC meeting was canceled due to the MRC Conference, Nov 16-17 at Fort Worden*).**



# SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

*Minutes of the December 13, 2018, Skagit County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) meeting, held at the Port of Anacortes*

- **MRC Members Attending:** Sarah Tchang, Jay Lind, Lynne Jordan, Pete Haase, Paul Dinnel, Phyllis Bravinder, Darla Gay Smith (Rachel Best's Alternate) Tracy Alker, Jamey Selleck (called in)
- **MRC Members Absent:** Rachel Best, Todd Mitchell, Betsy Stevenson, Nathan Biletnikoff, Jude Apple, Todd Woodard
- **Others Attending:** Wayne Huseby, Friends of Skagit Beaches; Dana Oster, NWSC; Diane Hennebert, City of Anacortes; Matt Castle, Samish DNR

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

**Approval of Minutes:** October 11, 2018, MRC meeting minutes were approved as written. There was no MRC meeting in November because of the MRC Conference.

**Public Comments:** Paul welcomed Diane Hennebert, the new Stormwater Coordinator with the City of Anacortes. Diane replaced John Franz who recently retired.

## **Kelp Recovery Plan Update:** *Dana Oster and Jamey Selleck*

Since 2017, the Northwest Straits Commission has been working in collaboration with the Puget Sound Restoration Fund (PSRF), NOAA Fisheries, Washington Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) to develop a Kelp Conservation and Recovery Plan for Puget Sound. Several workshops were held last year to summarize what we know and don't know about kelp, which resulted in a lengthy literature review. It turns out there is a lot more that is unknown than known about kelp which makes it difficult to formulate a strategy for recovery. We are now heading into year two of this effort. The focus for 2019 will be on identifying the data gaps, priorities, and what can be accomplished in the next year or two with a smaller budget. To help identify the data gaps and priorities, a survey will be sent out to as many stakeholders as possible (e.g. tribes, scientists, researchers, local government agencies, etc.). The feedback from the survey will help frame the agenda for the next workshop that will be held on February 28<sup>th</sup> at Padilla Bay. The main focus of the workshop will be to look at the high priority data gaps and develop a strategy to start filling those data gaps. There will be a limited number of seats at the first workshop, but at least one member from each MRC will be invited to attend. Dana said they will also look into the possibility of setting up a WebEx to enable more people to attend. The second workshop will be held Olympia sometime in the spring or summer of 2019 which will focus on the policy side of things. There will be a discussion regarding the current management framework and how it relates to kelp, and what the state, county and tribal planners, managers, and policy makers see as challenges and needs and actions to include in the Kelp Recovery Plan. Dana encouraged MRC members to stay informed with what is going on in the kelp the recovery effort and get involved in some of the outreach.

## **Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Report:** *Dana Oster*

- **Pinto Abalone Status Presentation:** Hank Carson, Research Scientist with WDFW, presented the historical overview, population status and recovery program for pinto abalone. Research shows that the pinto abalone population is on the brink of extinction in Puget Sound because there are just too few of them to reproduce on their own in the wild without human intervention. Public meetings were recently held in Port Townsend and Anacortes. WDFW is seeking public comments regarding the proposed status change through the end of March, 2019.
- **Southern Resident Killer Whale Recovery:** The San Juan MRC recently hosted a southern resident killer whale recovery community workshop to discuss the commitments and actions that have been taken since last year's workshop. The next community workshop is scheduled for January 8. The San Juan MRC will be staffing a booth at the Seattle Boat Show to support their Be Whale Wise and whale warning flag project. The Puget Sound Partnership Leadership Council added orcas as the 11<sup>th</sup> vital sign in the 2018 Action Agenda.
- **Next NWSC Meeting:** January 25 in Island County.

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

- **NWSF Administration:** Caroline will be taking extended personal leave. She will be working with the NWSF board to help with some of the administrative duties while she is away. The NWSF board president, Anne Murphy, will likely take on the role as the Interim Executive Director until they can find someone else to fill that position.
- **MRC Opportunity Fund:** The Foundation approved a \$6,000 request for the Skagit MRC to conduct a volunteer program needs assessment and host a facilitated workshop for the Salish Sea Stewards program. The goal is to help identify the structural and organizational needs of the volunteer community; identify opportunities for volunteer leadership and self-governance; look at other opportunities for partnerships and sources of funding; and move forward towards a sustainable volunteer-based model. The volunteer needs assessment survey will be sent to volunteers and other organizations with volunteer programs to help identify the needs, priorities, and goals of the volunteer community. The feedback from the survey will help frame the agenda of the workshop. Keeping the volunteers actively engaged is a key component to the success of the program. Lynne suggested looking into the Islands Oil Spill Association ([www.iosaonline.org](http://www.iosaonline.org)) as a potential funding partner for the Salish Sea Stewards program. The timeline for the survey and workshop has not been set yet, but it will happen within the next year or so. MRC members who would like to be involved in the planning process should contact Jay or Tracy.
- **New Communications Staff:** The NWSF hired Kenny Clarkson as their new Communication Specialist. Kenny will likely be making the rounds to MRC meetings to talk about his new position.

#### **MRC Administrative Report: Tracy**

- **MRC Grant Progress Reports Due- January 11:** MRC members were asked to submit their volunteer hours and report any leveraged funding or work in kind for MRC projects to Tracy before January 11<sup>th</sup>.
- **2019 Annual MRC Workplan:** The 2019 Annual MRC Workplan is being updated and will be routed to MRC members for review and to provide input.
- **MRC Conference Reimbursements:** MRC members who attended the MRC Conference in Port Townsend were reminded to send their hotel invoices and ferry receipts to Tracy as soon as possible for reimbursement.
- **MRC 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration:** Skagit MRC was officially established 20 years ago on May 4<sup>th</sup>, 1999. Tracy is looking for ideas to help celebrate the Skagit MRC's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Some of the ideas discussed included: sending out a press release, writing an article in the paper, and making it part of this year's Fidalgo Bay Day event.
- **MRC Officer Elections- January 10:** We will need to elect MRC Officers at the January 10<sup>th</sup> MRC meeting including MRC Chair and Vice-Chair, as well as the NWSC Representative and NWSC Alternate. Paul and Sarah can serve a second term as MRC Chair and Vice-Chair if interested. Nate and Jude both indicated they can no longer serve as the NWSC Representative and NWSC Alternate. Phyllis and Pete expressed interest in serving as the new NWSC Representative and NWSC Alternate.
- **NWSI Funding Support Strategy:** Lucas is requesting that each County MRC draft a letter for the County commissioners to sign and send to their state legislators expressing the importance of the MRC and the need for state funding. The intention of the letter is to raise awareness of the MRCs as we enter the next legislative session. Lucas provided a template that we can use and suggested we highlight a few MRC projects. Pete pointed out the importance of wording the letter in such a way that is meaningful to the legislators so they will see the value in the work that we do.

#### **2019 MRC Conference Discussion: All**

Sasha sent out a conference evaluation survey which had a good response rate and a lot of positive feedback. The NWSC is looking for ideas for future venues. The Skagit MRC was well represented at the 2019 MRC Conference. It was the NWSI's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary which included a celebration during the evening reception with cake. Former MRC members were invited to attend as well. Senator Kevin Ranker was the keynote speaker. There were many excellent presentations including: Tribal Treaty Rights; Southern Resident Orca Recovery; Ecosystem Health; MRC Story Crafting; Marine Debris; Sea Level Rise, and Bull Kelp. Pete and Mira also gave an excellent ignite presentation on the "Kids on the Beach" program. Phyllis said the presentation on bull kelp was excellent! Pete noted that very few people attended the MRC Story Crafting session which was unfortunate, because the MRCs seem to fall short when it comes to effectively telling our story and popularizing our message to connect to the broader community. Tarrell with the NWSF will be hosting a storytelling workshop with the Whatcom MRC at their January MRC meeting. If there is enough interest, we could invite Tarrell to host a similar workshop for the Skagit MRC. Pete suggested that the Skagit MRC consider forming an MRC Outreach Subcommittee to work on our messaging, updating and improving our display, and having a greater presence at special events.

## Project Status & Discussion

- Salish Sea Stewards: Joan Drinkwin has been contracted to serve once again as the Salish Sea Stewards Program Coordinator. The SSS Planning Subcommittee met with Joan on December 6<sup>th</sup> to start planning the 2019 Salish Sea Stewards Training Program. The training will be approximately 40 hours spanning ten weeks, starting March 19 – May 21, 2019. In return, volunteers will be asked to commit 40 hours of volunteer time towards MRC or related projects. Classes will be held every Tuesday from 1:00pm to 5:00pm at the Padilla Bay Reserve Facility. The facility has already been reserved. The curriculum will be very similar to what it was last year, with a few minor changes. For the first day, Joan will provide a lengthier overview of how the program works and what volunteer opportunities will be covered. We are also looking for a really great speaker for inspiration on the first day. Because our budget for this project was reduced, we will need to charge the applicants a small fee to cover the cost of their background checks. The fee will be handled by the Friends of Skagit Beaches or the Northwest Straits Foundation. The Friends of Skagit Beaches has also agreed to cover some of the other costs that the MRC Grant cannot cover. The application will be available on the MRC website. The application deadline is March 1. Joan already has a list of about five names of people who have expressed interest in signing up for the 2019 training.
- Fidalgo Bay Day: Fidalgo Bay Resort has been reserved for next year's Fidalgo Bay Day on August 24<sup>th</sup>, 2019. Jay will be working with Pete and Gina to plan and coordinate the event. The Friends of Skagit Beaches will once again host the very popular Discovery Passport Station activity. We will also have the beach seining activity and the Shannon Point Marine Center touch tank. MRC members talked about celebrating the Skagit MRC's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary as part of Fidalgo Bay Day. Phyllis suggested coming up with a fun interactive activity to help visitors make the connection with the Skagit MRC.
- Forage Fish Surveys: The index site surveys continue at Similk Bay, Ship Harbor along Guemes Channel and Samish Island. Skagit County Intern Charlotte Turman is the MRC lead for the index sites. Although we've never found any sand lance eggs at any of our sites, this is the time of year that we might start seeing some. Pete said that we've been collecting samples in Fidalgo Bay for over six years now, so we might need to start scaling back soon. A dozen or so trained volunteers and project managers recently convened to start looking at the six years of data and figuring out the best way to analyze it. There are over 200,000 data points! Pete said that we might be able to pick up a few more index sites to survey if sampling is scaled back in Fidalgo Bay. Volunteers have been collecting forage fish survey data at the Kukatali Reserve restoration site twice a month. Pete suggested folks go check it out now that the restoration work is done. The site is really starting to change shape. Just pay attention to the tides! Wayne thanked Pete for coordinating the forage fish surveys in Skagit County for the last six years.
- Kids on the Beach Project: Last year we contracted with Mira Lutz to develop and implement this pilot project. Mira recently got hired with the SeaDoc Society/UC Davis as their new Education Coordinator. We are currently working on contract negotiations with UC Davis to continue to expand the program to other schools in 2019. We've gotten several inquiries about the program from other schools, so we know there is interest.
- Bowman Bay Restoration: We now have a contract in place with the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group to continue plant maintenance activities in 2019. Lisa and Tracy completed a walkthrough of the planting at the restoration site with SFEG staff on November 9<sup>th</sup>. After the walkthrough, SFEG hosted a volunteer work party to plant 300 shrubs donated by SFEG with Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA) grant funds. Despite the horrible weather, a group of around 8 very dedicated volunteers, including Pete, showed up to help with the planting. There was also a nice article in the Anacortes American about the planting. The plants are really filling in nicely, particularly the dune grass and coastal strawberry. The shrubs are still struggling a little bit because of the harsh conditions. We will likely be planting more evergreen trees and shrubs at the site in 2019.
- Pinto Abalone Recovery: The 2018 report has been finalized and submitted. Tracy will post the report on the MRC website. We now have a signed contract in place with Puget Sound Restoration Fund. PSRF will continue monitoring in 2019 to look for survival, growth, and new natural recruits. So far they have not seen any naturally spawned juvenile abalone which is concerning. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is currently seeking public comment on a proposal to change the status of pinto abalone from a Species of Concern to a State Endangered Species. The preliminary status report for the pinto abalone in WA can be found online: <https://wdfw.wa.gov/publications/02031/>. WDFW recently held public meetings in Port Townsend and Anacortes to present background information, answer questions, and receive comments. The public can submit comments and

information about the species to Michael Ulrich at WDFW via email to [Michael.Ulrich@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:Michael.Ulrich@dfw.wa.gov), by phone (360-902-2737), or mail at Fish Program, P.O. Box 43200 Olympia, WA 98504-3200. The public comment period is extended through March, 2019. Paul requested the MRC consider writing a letter of support for changing the status of pinto abalone to a State Endangered Species, especially since pinto abalone recovery is one of our main projects and a high priority for the MRC. Paul offered to draft the letter for approval of the MRC. Because we are an Advisory Committee to the Board of County Commissioners, we will need to make sure they approve of the letter. The Committee discussed how the letter of support might be stronger and more meaningful if we linked it to some of our other work such as kelp recovery. Elected officials would also probably like to know the economic impact.

- Olympia Oyster Restoration: Paul is working on the data analysis and report which will likely be done sometime in December. With funding from the Puget Sound Restoration Fund, additional oyster seed was applied across a half acre of shell along Weaverling Spit in early November. Additional shell was also distributed across half an acre near the trestle to improve substrate for oyster settlement. A new book on Goods and Services of Marine Bivalves just came out. Paul worked with Betsy Peabody on one of the sections in the book that highlighted the value of citizen scientists in oyster restoration across the United States and included a photo of Sarah Tchang. The book was shared with MRC members and is available for free online: <https://www.springer.com/gp/book/9783319967752>.
- Kayak Kelp Surveys: The monitoring effort has grown from just two volunteers to seven volunteers monitoring three kelp bed locations in Skagit County. Last year Joan helped connect some of the new Salish Sea Stewards volunteers with the more experienced volunteers so they could learn the kelp survey protocols. It ended up taking too much of Joan's time, so Phyllis will be taking on that role this year. The volunteers usually schedule and coordinate the surveys on their own. Phyllis said that it has been a bit of a challenge to figure out who is doing what and when.

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

- Storming the Sound- January 24, 9am-4:30pm at Maple Hall in La Conner. Storming the Sound is a conference for environmental educators in the north Puget Sound region to share their interest and expertise. They are currently seeking presenters. There is a registration fee of \$10. You can register online: <http://www.pacname.org/regional-chapters/washington/storming-the-sound/#tab-id-1>.
- Terry Stevens Retirement Open House: January 10, 4pm-6:30pm at Padilla Bay. RSVP is required.
- Friends of Skagit Beaches Annual Winter Lecture Series: The first lecture will be held **January 18, 2019** at the NW Education Services District Building in Anacortes, 7pm-8:30pm. "Forage Fish in the Southern Salish Sea" presented by Dr. Todd Sandell, PhD, Senior Forage Fish Biologist, WDFW. He will discuss recent studies that will help lead to better understanding, protection, and management of these crucial fish species, their habitats, and the species that depend on them. For more information about this and other upcoming Lecture Series topics please visit [www.skagitbeaches.org](http://www.skagitbeaches.org)

**The meeting adjourned at around 11:00 a.m. The next MRC meeting will be held January 10, 2019 at the Skagit County Administration Building in Mount Vernon (1800 Continental Place).**