



minutes

Meeting: Northwest Straits Commission

Location: Dungeness River Audubon Center, 2151 West Hendrickson Road, Sequim WA

Date/Time: January 27, 2017 – 10:00 AM-3:00 PM

Attendees:

Commission members: Nan McKay (Chair), Jamey Selleck (Vice-Chair, Skagit), Dale Moses (Jefferson), Alan Clark (Clallam), Doug Stark (Whatcom), Ed Adams (Island), Paul Clampitt (Snohomish), Ron Thom

Commission staff: Rich Childers, Nicole Jordan, Lucas Hart, Sasha Horst

Others in attendance: Mark Ozias (Clallam County Commission), Caroline Gibson (Northwest Straits Foundation), Jay Lind (Skagit), Peter Murchie (Environmental Protection Agency, EPA), Elizabeth Babcock (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, NOAA), Bob Vreeland (Clallam), Ruth Blyther (Jefferson), Jeff Ward (Clallam MRC, Chair), Ed Bowlby (Clallam MRC, Chair), Helle Anderson (Clallam MRC staff), Jeff Taylor (Jefferson-alt), Nathan Biletnikoff (Skagit-alt)

Absent: Terry Williams, Sheida Sahandy, Phil Green (San Juan), Tom Cowan, Jerry Masters

Welcome and introductions

Nan McKay opened the meeting. Mark Ozias, Clallam County Commissioner, welcomed the Commission to Clallam County and thanked the MRC for their work. Nan introduced Rich Childers as the new Northwest Straits Commission Director.

The minutes from the December Northwest Straits Commission meeting were approved and are available here: <http://nwstraits.org/archive/>

Clallam MRC Pigeon Guillemot Surveys

Ed Bowlby, chair of the Clallam MRC, presented on a citizen science project to monitor Pigeon Guillemots in Clallam County, an expansion of a project started more than 10 years ago in Island County. His presentation described habitat and behavioral information about the birds. He explained plans to expand the project by adding at least three sites, based on the availability of volunteers.

Northwest Straits Commission - committee reports

Executive Committee

Jamey Selleck said the director hiring process is complete, welcoming Rich Childers as new Commission Director. A subcommittee was formed to plan the annual retreat in February. MRC representation on the committee shifted as Phil Green, San Juan MRC, stepped down and Paul Clampitt, Snohomish MRC, joined.

Science Advisory Committee

Ron Thom said Island County found an incoming graduate student from the University of Washington to analyze their seining data. Anne Murphy spoke at the recent Science Advisory Committee on ocean noise.



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Cedar Bouta, Dept. of Ecology, spoke with members of the Science Advisory Committee on [net pen management guidelines](#). Public comments on the [summary of early "scoping-level" decisions](#) can be submitted to Cedar at cedar.bouta@ecy.wa.gov. Comments are due by March 4.

- Action: MRCs are encouraged to read through the "scoping level" decisions. If MRCs submit comments, please provide a copy Lucas at hart@nwstraits.org.
- Action: Lucas and Caroline will collect previously-sent net pen comment letters, along with deadlines and appropriate contacts for future commenting.
- Action: After reviewing any comments from MRCS, the Commission will make a decision whether to submit a separate comment letter.

Retreat Planning Committee

Nan said the committee hired a facilitator for the 2017 retreat. The committee is working on clarifying goals of the retreat. The Commission discussed incorporating strategic planning into the retreat. The Commission agreed that discussing future Commission meeting topics would be helpful.

- Action: Commission members and alternates are asked to respond to Nicole at jordan@nwstraits.org with your RSVP for the retreat, which is scheduled for February 23-34 at Padilla Bay Reserve.

External Relations Committee

Committee chair Tom Cowan was absent, so Nan updated on the work of the committee to help secure annual funding for MRCs. The committee is working on meeting with key state legislators requesting their support for a budget request of \$32,500 annually for each MRC from the state budget.

Puget Sound Task Force

Peter Murchie, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), explained the creation of the Puget Sound Federal Task Force through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The Task Force, made up of nine federal agencies and cabinets, has adopted an interim draft action plan ([Puget Sound Task Force Action Plan](#)) that describes the federal role in Puget Sound recovery and is broken into several prioritized areas including cross-cutting actions, habitat, storm water, federal lands and facilities, vessel traffic, shellfish, science and monitoring and treaty rights.

Elizabeth Babcock, NOAA, spoke on Appendix D of the Action Plan, which highlights Puget Sound monitoring and specific issues relevant to the Northwest Straits Commission. Peter encouraged the Commission to look at the Action Plan and identify key areas of collaboration.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Puget Sound Partnership (PSP) update

Rich updated on behalf Sheida Sahandy, PSP Executive Director. He said the Partnership is trying to get more information on the announced "EPA grant and contract freeze". All actions currently approved will continue to their stated end dates, including existing MRC grants. Marc Daily has accepted a position as the executive director of the Thurston County Planning Commission and will be leaving the Partnership in mid-February. The Partnership is in the process of recruiting for a number of key positions.



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- Action: Sheida requested people share the job openings far and wide to help find the best candidates. <http://www.psp.wa.gov/employment.php>

Northwest Straits Foundation

Caroline said four MRCs were approved for funding by the Foundation's new MRC Opportunity Fund. The Northwest Straits Foundation has contracted with Ruth Blyther to prepare a funding proposal to Shell, in coordination with Nathan Biletnikoff, Skagit MRC member and representative from Shell. Caroline is trying to schedule "friend-raisers" for five MRCs to increase visibility within their communities.

MRC reports

Monthly reports for each MRC are available by visiting this link: <http://bit.ly/2jDOIPN>

Clallam

Alan Clark said Andrew Shogren resigned as the representative for District I; Jeff Ward is now representing District I and the City of Sequim position is open. Clallam MRC's first 2017 educational outreach event, Food Webs Can Be Fishy, will be held Saturday February 25 from 2:00-4:00 PM in the Vern Burton Community Center. The annual 8-hr HAZWOPER will be held in Port Angeles, February 11, 2017.

Island

Ed Adams said Elsa Schwartz was elected as chair. Barbara Bennett was elected as vice-chair. He presented the MRCs forage fish findings from fall, pointing out that September was a particularly good month for surf smelt at all monitoring locations. The MRC is working with Island County Salmon Recovery Lead Entity to explore the feasibility of conducting seining at the Dugualla pocket estuary.

Jefferson

Dales Moses said Kate Dean is now the Board of County Commissioners' representative to Jefferson MRC. Sam Gibboney is now the Port of Port Townsend alternate, Nam Siu is now a Marine Practitioner representative, Emily Bishop is District 1 representative, and Frank Handler is District 2 alternate representative. The MRC is planning for 2017 grants and will discuss it at their next meeting.

San Juan

There was no representation from San Juan MRC at the meeting. Their report stated members Kathleen Dolsen and Chery Kummer have resigned. The MRC currently has two vacancies. Nan said San Juan County has approved some County funding so that Arnie Klaus, San Juan MRC staff, can increase work from 55% to 80% time.

Skagit

Jamey was elected as the new chair for Skagit MRC, Sarah Tchang is the new MRC vice-chair. Nathan Biletnikoff is the new Commission alternate. Ron Judd, a reporter for The Seattle Times visited the last Skagit MRC meeting and provided journalistic advice on how the MRC can increase exposure of their projects in their community. Skagit MRC was recently awarded funding from the Northwest Straits Foundation's MRC Opportunity Fund and from Shell Puget Sound Refinery to expand the invasive green crab monitoring effort.



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Snohomish

Paul Clampitt said Snohomish MRC staff and several MRC members conducted interviews for new members, positions were recommended for four candidates. The MRC will receive \$50,000 from the Snohomish-Stillaguamish Local Integrating Organization (LIO) for the MRC's Near Term Action (NTA) Project: Removal of Creosote Pilings in the Snohomish Estuary. The MRC found forage fish eggs at Howarth Park on the first forage fish survey on the newly-restored beach.

Whatcom

Doug Stark said the MRC wrote a recommendation to the County Executive to appoint Elizabeth Kilanowski for a second term in a Scientific Interest position, Doug Stark for a second term in a Conservation/Environmental position, and Christine Woodward to join the MRC in a Conservation/Environmental position, filling Laura Hanna's position. The MRC hosted a sold-out screening of [A Plastic Ocean](#) at Barkley Cinemas in Bellingham.

Business Items

Marine Resource Advisory Council (MRAC)

Rich said he attended the January MRAC meeting. He said the [Blue Ribbon Panel](#) recommendations are being refreshed. Discussions on the refresh will start March 17.

Funding update:

- **NOAA Kelp Recovery funds**

Caroline, Sasha and Lucas assembled a proposal to NOAA for funds to draft a kelp recovery plan. Funding would be provided to the NWS Foundation with the NWS Commission as a partner. Other partners include Puget Sound Restoration Fund, Tom Mumford and Helen Berry (Dept. of Natural Resources).

- **Ocean Acidification grant submission**

Sasha and Lucas submitted an OA grant proposal to NOAA. The project proposes to collect social data around Puget Sound that will inform predictive models of ocean acidification. The proposal has multiple partners from Pacific Northwest National Labs, Ecology, DNR and Oregon State University.

WDFW online forage fish data update

Lucas said he is working on helping MRCs utilize forage fish data available at the [WA Department of Fish and Wildlife website](#).

2017-18 MRC Request for Proposals

Sasha said the Commission is proceeding as planned with 2017-18 Request for Proposals for MRC grants—anticipated to be issued in early March, with a goal of starting the new grant cycle on October 1, 2017.



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- Action: MRCs are encouraged to begin considering 2017-18 project ideas at their upcoming meetings. Those with questions can contact Sasha Horst at horst@nwstraits.org

Affiliate membership in the International Alliance to Combat Ocean Acidification

The Commission discussed and agreed to join the [International Alliance to Combat Ocean Acidification](#) as the Northwest Straits Initiative.

- Action: Rich will take the lead on the process of beginning membership with the alliance.

Round table

The Commission discussed ways to approach education and outreach centered on Ocean Acidification within the Initiative.

*The next Commission meeting is scheduled for March 31 from 10:00 AM-12:00 PM over WebEx *